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Mr. Rutherford's children

Susan Warner, Amy Lowell, Cairns Collection of American Women Writers

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Chryssa and Mrs. Salisbury in the garden, p. 87. [*Front.*

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Warner, Sam

Ellen Montgomery's Bookshelf.

MR. RUTHERFORD'S CHILDREN.

BY THE AUTHORS OF

"THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD," "QUEECHY," "SPECULATION,"

ETC. ETC.

LONDON:

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & CO.,

FARRINGDON-STREET.

1855.

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THE STORY
OF
ELLEN MONTGOMERY'S BOOKSHELF.

THOSE people who ever knew Ellen Montgomery, will remember, perhaps, her friend Miss Alice; and perhaps remember too, that in Miss Alice's bookcase at the parsonage, Ellen found a supply of pleasure for her reading-time. There were Cook's Voyages, and Plutarch's Lives, and divers other books with which she used to delight herself, in those days when yet she was living with Miss Fortune. All this was told about in the history of Ellen which has been published. But it was not told in that history, as indeed no book can tell quite everything, that there were a few of Miss Alice's early childish books, for which, as well as for the grander works mentioned above, Ellen Montgomery had a great favour; and not Ellen Montgomery alone, but Ellen Chauncey, also. When she had once read them, Ellen by degrees gathered them all down from the upper part of the bookcase, and stowed them away by themselves, on a short shelf near the bottom, where she could easily and at any time get at them; Miss Alice having cleared out for her the books that used to stand there before.

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And it fell out one time, that Mr. John, having brought home a set of new books, was looking for a place to put them, and happened upon the row of Ellen's favourites. "What do these children's books down here, Alice?" said he, pulling them out; "the place for these is at the top." "Oh, stop, you mustn't, John," said his sister—"that is Ellen Montgomery's bookshelf." And Mr. John smiled, and put the books back again in due order; though not so well but that Ellen, the next time she came, found that somebody had been meddling with them. For she had left "Mr. Rutherford's Children" at one end, and "The Christmas Stocking" next it; and now "The Christmas Stocking" was at the end, and "The Breakfast Table" next, and "Mr. Rutherford's Children" in the middle.

It is possible, I suppose, that other children might like what Ellen liked. But these books of hers cannot be found now at any of the book-shops; so we will give out the first volume of "Mr. Rutherford's Children" (there are several volumes) by way of trial; and if that is liked well enough, "The Christmas Stocking;" and in time, maybe, the whole bookshelf. I hope they will be liked, because else the "Bookshelf" will never be finished; and unfinished things are disagreeable.

I am the friend of all Ellen Montgomery's friends,

ELIZABETH WETHERELL.

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SUGGESTIVE.

I THINK it necessary to come to the help of the Public. Lest Miss Wetherell should not have her dues, they are giving her the dues of every one else; and whatever my hand may have to do on "Ellen Montgomery's Bookshelf," there it is—even though "a discerning Public" perceive it not. No matter for that—I had as soon be behind the books as before them; but must enter my protest against facts which are no facts.

Therefore, kind Public, Messrs. Editors, and friends in general, I propose this division of the volumes; by which my sister and I will each in turn have written them all. *Whatever book or part of a book you particularly like, thank Miss Wetherell for it;* and let all those pages which are less interesting be charged to the account of

AMY LOTHROP.

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MR. RUTHERFORD'S CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

WHERE THEY LIVED.

WILD-ROSE-LANE ran down from Dusty-turnpike to the sea-shore, but, as you might suppose, it was a long distance between the two. No one who saw the clouds of dust on the turnpike, or the sparkling of the blue water of the sea, would think there could be a straight road from the one to the other. To say the truth, the lane was *not* straight. For a while after it left the turnpike its course was pretty direct, but then you might have thought that the lane was sometimes sociable and sometimes solitary in its taste; for it would run off on purpose to meet a queer-looking little brown house with ever so many children, and pigs, and chickens, and a little black dog that barked at everything but the lane; and then, as if the lane itself were quite disgusted, it would take a short turn into the cool quiet woods. It was a wonder it did not stay there always.

A great many things lived by the side of this lane. And first there were the wild roses, which grew finely and just as they felt inclined—wandering about after the lane's example. They climbed over the fence and hung down their heads to look through it; and they laid their little red cheeks on the rails, and on the posts, and sometimes on the green bank below; only the buds stood up quite straight to look about them. They were very plain

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common roses, with four or five red petals and a great yellow centre; but they were very sweet, nevertheless, and now and then their perfume came up even to Dusty-turnpike.

Among the roses the little birds built their nests, and lived there with the thorns to protect them. Nobody could see the nests from the lane; only you could see the birds lighting upon the roses and then creeping into some little place where there must have been something in the shape of a house. The song sparrows had bluish eggs with brown speckles all over, and the chipping birds had light blue eggs with dark spots at one end. Nobody ever disturbed them, for the lane was very quiet; and when the rose leaves fell down upon the eggs there was nothing to brush them off but the wind, and that could hardly get in, the hedge was so thick.

A great many butterflies lived in the lane, and the bees did not live there exactly; but they came every day and then went back to the hive at night; and there were some caterpillars too, but that there always will be where there are butterflies, and the birds had the less trouble to get their breakfasts. Only the little chipping birds had a very nice taste and preferred bread; and they used to fly off to Mr. Rutherford's house, and pick up the crumbs that were shaken from the table-cloth and swept out of the door.

For Mr. Rutherford lived by the side of Wild-Rose-lane; and he thought there were no butterflies so merry and no red-cheeked roses so sweet, as Sybil and Chryssa, his two little daughters. They were not really his daughters, though he called them so; and though he loved them and they loved him as if he had been their father; but he was only their father's brother.

Sybil and Chryssa were orphans. Before they were old enough to know and feel the sorrow or the loss, God took away both their parents from earth to heaven; and indeed there was no reason to feel sorrow, for the children were as well taken care of as they could be, and their

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father and mother had loved God and tried to serve Him while they were here, and had prayed Him to forgive them for Christ's sake; and the Bible says that, "Whosoever believeth in Him hath eternal life."

Mr. Rutherford's house stood just by the side of the lane. It was large and white, with a front piazza and a back piazza, and a great many windows. From some of these windows you could look far away, over green meadows and streams of water, to where the sun used to set in summer; but in winter it went down behind a clump of pine trees. In front of the house you could see very little way—there was just the lawn and the hedge, and then on the other side of the lane there were a great many cherry trees that stood up so straight that their heads seemed to touch the sky. It was quite wonderful that the boys who used to climb up after the cherries never seemed to fall.

All about the lawn in front of Mr. Rutherford's house there were a great many flowers; and behind the house, though there were no flowers, there was another green lawn, which stretched away till it fell in with a grove of locust trees. Beyond the grove the hill was very steep, and at the foot there stood the barns and carriage-house.

Further still, outside the barn-yard, was the cow's green meadow and the brook where the water-cresses grew.

Within doors it was no less pleasant. The drawing-room was oval-shaped and had three windows. Here stood a little tea-table, a large old-fashioned mahogany sofa with chairs to match, and two little benches—the favourite seats of Mr. Rutherford's children. The paper on the walls had a yellow ground with large bunches of green flowers; brass andirons stood in the open fire-place; there were vases of artificial flowers on the mantel-piece, and a great many flowers in the green carpet.

In the back parlour were two pantries, a brown carpet, a sideboard instead of a sofa, and maple chairs

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instead of mahogany. There were two benches here also, and on one of these Chryssa seated herself the first day of her arrival, and looking up at the vases said, "Well, this is a fine house!"

But, when I say her *arrival*, I mean only her return home after a winter spent in town, when she was of that happy age which forgets between autumn and spring. For in this house had Chryssa spent the most of her short life, and even Sybil could remember little of any other. Here had Mr. Rutherford's children lived all the years that their father and mother had been in heaven; and God had watched over them, and kept them alive, and well and happy. They did not always think who it was that took such care of them, that gave them sleep at night, and let them awake every morning to such pleasant days; they did not know that God never forgot them—that He took much better care of the two little helpless children than their father and mother could have done; yet it was so. And Mr. Rutherford's children were very happy. Plain and simple as everything was at Rose-hill, Chryssa found enough to admire; whether she studied the green lilies of the valley on the drawing-room paper, or the many colours in the drawing-room carpet; and in the garden there was always something beautiful. To look at the dark blue spider-flower and wonder whence came its name; to find the little red and white poppies and the merry-faced johnny-jumpers springing up in the gravel walk; and above all to stand and watch the evening-primroses at sunset, and give them one of her gentle breaths when they did not open fast enough, these were never-failing pleasures.

The two children slept in a large room over the back parlour, with only a closet between it and their aunt's room. Their own room was the pleasantest, Chryssa thought, for it had three windows; and she was very fond of the great mahogany bedstead where they slept, and of the polished brass andirons where she used to see the odd reflection of her own face, and the green wire

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fender with its brass top-rail all stdded with brass knobs, like the turrets on a battlement.

It is evening in this room; and on the edge of the bed kneels a very little child, while in front of her—standing and making of her arms and herself a sort of barricade—is a girl some years older. And what are they doing? The elder child is trying to teach the younger her first prayer; and the baby—as I may almost call her—somewhat unwillingly, and with a very slight sense of the meaning and importance of the words, repeats after her sister in her own broken English—

"Our Father which art in Heaven."

And this was the first thing that little Chryssa could remember about herself.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIRDS, THE CRAVAT, AND THE MINISTER.

It was summer weather, and Chryssa wore no stockings, but only little high morocco shoes tied round the ankle.

Thus it happened one morning, that while Sybil still sat on the floor busy covering her bare feet, Chryssa sprang up, exclaiming, "Ah, I have got done first!"

"Good reason why," said Sybil; "you have no stockings to put on. But I wonder what you call 'done,'—look at your shoe-strings."

"Because I don't know how to tie a bow-knot; and if I tie them in a hard knot they'll never come out. Oh! here is a little stone got into my shoe. Wouldn't it be nice to wear bare feet?—so cool."

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"But nobody does, except poor children," said Sybil.

"Oh yes," said Chryssa; "the chickens have bare feet —and the cats."

"No, the cats have stockings," said Sybil; "fur stockings."

"How nice that would be," said Chryssa, laughing. "I wish I was a cat."

"I don't wish you were," said Sybil, "because then I should be one too."

"Then we'd be two kittens," said Chryssa; "with whiskers and fur stockings."

"And claws," said Sybil.

"No, we wouldn't have any claws," said Chryssa, "because you know we shouldn't want to scratch anybody. And we wouldn't have green eyes either. But oh, Sybil, won't you show me how to tie a bow-knot?"

And sitting down on the floor opposite her sister, the two little feet were stretched out with the dangling shoestrings.

"Now do you see?" said Sybil. "You make a loop of this one so, and put the other round so, and——"

"But I can't see *so!*" exclaimed Chryssa. "You must come close beside me."

"Oh yes you can," said Sybil, as she drew the knot. "Now you can tie the other one in the same way."

"I can't—I don't know how. You must come here and show me."

"No indeed," said Sybil, "you can see perfectly well if you will only take the trouble," and up she got and began to brush her hair; while Chryssa sat looking at her outstretched feet, the tied shoe and the untied shoe, with a very doubtful face.

"Why, Chryssa, what is the matter that you look so disconsolate?" said Mrs. Rutherford, as she threw open the closet door and came in. "There isn't a bit of fog out of doors this morning: how comes there to be any in here?"

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"What does the fog do?" said Chryssa, looking up with a brightened face.

"The fog makes the blue sky look gray and the sun look dim, and everything else dark and uncomfortable."

"Except the spider's webs," said Chryssa. "Ah, Aunt Esther, you forget how bright they look with the dewdrops on them."

"Well, but are your eyelashes spider's webs?" said her aunt, as she took Chryssa up on her lap.

"No indeed," said Chryssa, laughing and shaking her head about; "but you see, Aunt Esther, I didn't know how to tie a bow-knot, and Sybil wouldn't show me so that I could learn."

"So that you would learn," said Sybil.

"There is a verse in the Bible," said Mrs. Rutherford, who was quietly tying the other shoe, "which says, 'Little children, love one another.'"

Chryssa looked down at her shoes, and Sybil brushed her hair more earnestly than ever.

"I think there 's a verse in the Bible for almost everything," she said at last; "but then one never remembers them at the right time. I can think of plenty of verses afterwards."

"Aunt Esther, did *you* ever learn the whole Bible by heart?" inquired Chryssa.

"No, love, I never did."

"What an idea!" said Sybil. "I don't believe anybody could."

"I believe some people have done it," said her aunt. "But without learning the whole Bible, Sybil, you and Chryssa might learn one verse every day, and see how well you can obey it."

"That would be so nice," said Chryssa. "What verse shall we learn to day?—'Little children, love one another'?"

"Yes," said her aunt smiling, "I think that will do very well."

Chryssa jumped down from her seat, and then she

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danced all the way down stairs and into the garden to bid the flowers good morning. Nothing could be more fresh and lovely than they all were; and as she walked along from mosspink to periwinkle, her admiration was too great to be spoken; she could only fold her hands and look at the beauties with a very grave little face indeed. But by the time she had gone once round the lawn the bell rang.

"Oh, Aunt Esther!" she cried as she ran in, "there's such a beautiful sweet-william out!—with pink stripes and dark in the middle."

The family were all gathered in the back parlour for prayers, but Chryssa was in no mood for anything quiet; and though she did keep still until prayers were over, she came singing to the breakfast-table, and while a blessing was asked her eyes went out of the window.

It so happened that one of the chipping-birds had already come from the lane to get crumbs; and he hopped about the piazza, and gave Chryssa a look out of his little bright eyes that was quite irresistible; Chryssa laughed.

"That was very naughty," said Mr. Rutherford, gravely though gently, when he had concluded.

Chryssa coloured and hung her head.

"I saw a bird in the piazza," she said, "and it looked at me, and I laughed."

"We hold down our heads," replied her uncle, "that we may see nothing to make us forget that we are speaking to God We cannot expect him to bless us if we think of something else while we ask for his blessing."

Chryssa understood and remembered, and never again listened with open eyes.

Breakfast over, Mr. Rutherford began to make ready for town, and the children ran off to do their part of the preparation. This was to get the prettiest rose that could be found on either of their own little monthly-rose bushes; for they never forgot that their uncle liked to have one in his button-hole as he drove down to the

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city; and there was generally quite a consultation as to which rose was the largest, and pinkest, and sweetest. This morning the best was found upon Chryssa's bush, and she followed her uncle to the willow-tree where the gig stood, with the rose in her hand and some request in her mouth which was the subject of a long confidential whisper.

"What were you talking about?" said Sybil as Mr. Rutherford drove off, and Chryssa came skipping back from the willow-tree.

"Oh, never mind—you mustn't ask. Suppose we go and look for those queer flowers in the grass,—and oh Sybil, let's watch the little bird on her nest; but we'll find the flowers first."

The flowers grew on a long stalk here and there among the grass. The grass was pretty tall now too, though not ready for mowing; but these particular flowers that the children were so fond of, were taller still, and lifted their purple heads above the green blades of grass modestly enough perhaps, but still in a very decided manner. The flower itself was quite pretty, but the plant's chief attraction lay in the stem.

"See, here is a fine one, Chryssa," said Sybil when they had run about for a few minutes. Chryssa stood eagerly by to watch while her sister broke off the flower. From the end of the stem came out some large drops that looked like very thick milk: Sybil held that end in the sunshine, and immediately the white drops began to grow yellowish, then orange, and then of so deep a colour that they looked more like molasses than milk. At this point the flower was thrown away and a fresh one sought out.

The bees were humming around the white clover, and the butterflies were flitting lazily about in a dainty sort of a way; and the birds in the hedge sang as if their throats were full of music. The children ran about till they were tired, and then jumped into the long grass and lay down. And the grass stood up straight on all sides

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of them, so that all anybody could see at first was a broken place in the grass; then they could find what looked like a picture of Sybil and Chryssa in a pretty green frame.

"How pleasant it is!" said Chryssa, shutting up her eyes quite tight. "I don't want to go in ever—do you?"

"I don't know, said Sybil. "I suppose I might, some time or other. If it were tea-time—and we had strawberries for tea."

"Oh, if it were tea-time," said Chryssa,—"but that's a great way off. And I don't care about dinner much."

"I wonder what the little bird's doing," said Sybil, and how she gets on with her nest. Suppose we go and see."

"Well, suppose we do," said Chryssa.

So they got up and left their own little nests in the grass, and went to the house and into the front parlour. The window at which they placed themselves opened upon the piazza, along the front of which roses and honeysuckles stretched and twined themselves, supported by two or three iron chains. Among the leaves and flowers by which the chains were quite hidden, a little brown bird was building her nest. The children stood perfectly quiet, hardly daring to stir for fear of frightening her, and watched the progress of the work. The nest was nearly finished. Little sticks, and twigs, and stalks of hay, were nicely plaited together, to make a rough-looking little tea-cup—rough on the outside, but within there were no twigs allowed to show themselves, only dry grass; and now the bird brought long horsehairs and wove them in, to make the nest still softer. Then she sat on the edge of the nest with her head a little on one side, lost in doubt or admiration—Chryssa could not tell which.

"What do you suppose birdie is thinking of?" said she softly.

"Thinking how nice her nest looks, maybe," said Sybil. "There she goes!"

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She was gone a longer time than usual, the children thought, and they were talking very earnestly about the reason; but when they looked again, there she sat on the edge of the nest, and in her bill a little white feather. She turned her head about two or three times, gave a little low chirp, and then jumped down into the nest, feather and all.

"The nest must be almost done now," said Chryssa joyfully, "because birdie is making her bed."

"Miss Chryssa," said Janet, who had come into the room without being noticed, so busy were eyes and thoughts with the bird. "Miss Chryssa, here is something for you, Miss. Michael is just come home with the gig a minute ago, and he brought it."

"For me?" said Chryssa, "what can it be! Are you *sure* it's for me, Janet?"

"That's what Michael says, Miss."

"Do open it, Chryssa," said her sister.

Chryssa unfolded one corner of the parcel and immediately hugged it up to her breast with a face of great delight.

"How very good!" she cried. "Oh, I'm so glad! Uncle Ruth is too good!"

"But what is it?"

"Why you see," said Chryssa, "I asked him—but I did'nt think he'd do it to-day—to get a little silk handkerchief for Aunt Esther; and then as soon as he got to town he bought one and made Michael bring it home. Isn't he good?"

"But what made you ask him?"

"Because I heard her say she wanted one, and I thought I should like to give it to her. And you see," continued Chryssa, as she undid the parcel, "it's perfectly beautiful! I like the colour *so* much—it's straw-colour; and it's fringed too. Come, let's go and give it to her;" and they ran away up stairs, where all the exclamations of pleasure were again and again repeated.

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The children had finished all their lessons and eaten their dinner; and now the sun was sinking slowly down in the west, and the long shadows lay across the lawn from one side to the other. Everything looked a little weary and quiet. The countrymen drove down the lane in their waggons which had looked so spruce and clean when they went to market in the morning; but now the wheels were muddy, and the rest of the waggon splashed and soiled, and the horses hung down their heads and trotted slowly along; and even the countrymen looked tired, till they remembered that they were going home to tea, and then they touched their horses with the whip to make them go faster.

The chickens had finished their tea, and were sauntering along to bed, but stopping to eat everything they found by the way; and the birds were looking for a nice roosting-place in the trees, and some of the flowers were folding up their pretty leaves; while the evening-primroses were just beginning to open their eyes, which were too weak to bear the sunlight. Up in the sky the clouds were bright with red, and gold-colour, and purple, that did not look as if they could ever sleep; yet they too would by and by be gray and quiet like all the rest.

Sybil sat in the drawing-room window reading "Northern Regions," and Chryssa stood by her side with "Original Poems" in her hand, but just then she was looking out of the window. For the little bird seemed inclined to try her feather bed, and she had got into the nest and out again about half-a-dozen times; fidgeting and chirping and hopping about as if she did not know what to do with herself. Chryssa watched her with great interest,—then she heard the gate at the foot of the lawn open and shut. Sybil heard it too, and looked out.

"There comes Mr. McIlvaine, Aunt Esther," she said. "Who is Mr. McIlvaine?" said Chryssa, standing up on her toes to see the better.

"Why, our minister—that preaches to us every Sunday," said Sybil, going back to "Northern Regions."

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"Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, who was endeavouring to make up her mind how she liked Mr. McIlvaine out of the pulpit, "do all ministers wear black clothes?"

"A great many of them—perhaps all."

"And do they all look so grave, as if they didn't feel happy?"

But Mrs. Rutherford had no time to answer this difficult question, for the visitor came in and took his seat by the window.

Chryssa eyed him with some distrust: neither black clothes nor grave looks quite suited her taste; and Mr. McIlvaine was not destined this day to grow in her favour. For a while she looked at him with a face as grave as his own, and then going to the sofa she began softly to "slide down hill" upon one of its round cushions; and her mind being thus happily diverted from all sublunary affairs, she was greatly astonished when Mr. McIlvaine suddenly turned round and addressed himself to her.

"How many eyes have you, Chryssa?" said he.

Nobody could have mistaken the number of Chryssa's eyes at that moment. The question was asked just when she and the cushion had pleasantly reached the ground together; but without making any attempt to regain her place on the sofa, Chryssa sat still on the cushion and opening her eyes very wide indeed, answered,

"Two, sir."

"And how many ears?" said Mr. McIlvaine without smiling in the least.

Chryssa thought for a minute, to make sure she had the right number, and said as before, "Two, Sir."

"And only one mouth, have you? How many?"

The little mouth said very softly, "One."

"You have two eyes, and two ears, and only one mouth;—then you should see a great deal, and hear a great deal, and say very little."

Chryssa looked exceedingly mystified, but ventured no reply, and the sofa cushion was left to take care of itself

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for the rest of the visit; while she sat with her hands folded, only resting herself now and then by changing their position, and putting sometimes the right hand on the top and sometimes the left, or by drawing a very soft long breath.

At last the visitor went away, and then the tongue began to assert its rights.

"Aunt Esther, was I making any noise?"

"Not the least."

"Then what made him say that to me?"

"I suppose he thought it was a good thing for children to know and remember."

"*You* don't think so, Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, leaning her arms upon Mrs. Rutherford's lap and looking up in her face. "*You* like to have me talk and ask questions?"

"Yes dear, always. But strangers mightn't like it so well—they might call it troublesome."

"I shall never ask *him* any!" said Chryssa, "and I didn't, either. But Aunt Esther, when I said there was a little grease spot on Mrs. Anable's frock, she said children shouldn't have such sharp eyes."

"Don't you think the tongue had something to do there, Chryssa?" said her aunt smiling.

"Yes," said Sybil, "you know you are to see a great deal more than you tell."

"So I did," said Chryssa: "there were *two* grease spots. And I thought it was very kind to tell her of them."

"I have no doubt of your good intentions, my dear," said Mrs. Rutherford, "but by and by you will understand the difference between other people's business and your own. And for the present, try never to hear what you are not wanted to hear, nor to say anything that will trouble anybody,—then your little ears and tongue will be in pretty good order."

"And how about the eyes, Aunt Esther?" said Sybil.

"If our eyes are often lifted up to God for his help

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and blessing, he will not let them go far wrong," said her aunt. "And then we shall look at ourselves with more knowledge, and at our neighbours with more charity."

CHAPTER III.

CHERRY AND DASH, AND WHERE THEY WENT.

THE carriage-house and barn stood, as I have said, at the foot of the hill behind the house. The road wound round through the trees, going pleasantly down all the while, till it came to the barn-yard gate. Here were a number of buildings—the carriage-house and harness-room, the barn, the stable, and the cow-house. Round the barn-yard there was quite a high wall.

"Come Chryssa," said Sybil one afternoon, "let's go down and see Michael harness the horses."

"Are we going to ride?" said Chryssa. "Because if we are we must get ready."

"Oh, we shall have time enough—I can get ready while he's driving up the hill, can't you? We'll set off just before him."

"Well," said Chryssa. "But we shall have to run very fast. Come."

Off they went, down the road and through the locust trees, till they came to a shady place near the top of the wall. There they sat down.

Everything looked very pretty. The sun was just high enough to throw a beautiful yellow light between the long shadows, and the sky was perfectly blue, without the least bit of a cloud. Far down in the meadow they could see the white cow lying down among the buttercups, and the red cow standing up and switching

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her tail about to keep off the flies; and it would seem that some flies had found their way into the stable, for the horses stamped their feet now and then with great energy. The chickens were picking about the barn-yard, and sometimes an old hen would stoop her head and go under the fence, and then stoop her head and come back again. One hen, with buff-coloured feathers, was rolling and kicking in a dusty corner, as if her object was to get as dirty as possible.

"What a hen!" said Chryssa. "I never did like that old yellow hen."

"Your white hen has been there too," said Sybil, "and there she goes again, see. I wonder where Speckle is."

"Oh there she is, down in the meadow by Whiteside," said Chryssa. "I can just see her. How red her comb is!"

Michael now came down the road and threw open the great doors of the carriage-house, and drew out the barouche into the road. Then he shut the doors again, and went through a little door into the harness-room, and coming out with a great load of leather and brass trappings, he went off to the stable.

"Now he'll have them out very soon," said Sybil. "I hear him: what do you suppose he means by 'Come up, sir'?"

"I don't know," said Chryssa. "Maybe one of them was lying down."

And now the stable door opened, and a pretty brown horse, bearing his half of the load of leather, came out, and marched along through the gate which Michael had left open, till he came to the carriage, and then he stepped very carefully over the pole and took his place at the other side of it.

"That's Cherry!" exclaimed both the children together. "How pretty he looks! how nice he is! That's just the way he always does And there comes Michael, leading Dash."

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Michael put Dash in his place, and began to make all fast; and then stroking his hand over Cherry, and giving him one or two pats, he looked up and smiled at the children, as much as to say, "Did you ever see a better brushed coat?" and the children looked at the smooth, shining horses, and the clean harness and carriage, and the bright brass mountings, and smiled back their approbation. Then they ran away to the house to get ready.

In those days Sybil and Chryssa wore nankeen coats with tight sleeves and two or three little round capes; or if the weather was very warm, they put on white tippets and long white sleeves made like a mitt at the hand. These sleeves had strings at the top, which were pushed under the short frock-sleeves and tied to the shoulder strap; in Chryssa's opinion it was a most ingenious system of torture. She thought her frock-sleeve was never made large enough for her arm and somebody's hot fingers besides; and by the time she was fairly equipped she was in a fidget all over. But these uncomfortable feelings soon vanished when she was seated in the barouche and wheeling round the lawn; and once through the gate and out on the open road, with the fresh air and sweet sight and smell of the wild roses in the hedge, it would have taken much more than heat or uncomfortable sleeves to cloud her face. Sometimes she sat on the back seat among the cushions, and her feet not within speaking distance of the floor; sometimes both children were on the front seat together.

And there they would sit, watching the shadows of the coachman and horses, of the carriage and their own little selves, straw bonnets and all, as they danced up and down the road-side, now on the grass, and now on the ground, and now in the hedge, and wondering what made the horses' legs so long and their bodies so short!

Once they went towards the sea-shore, and then the water would come glimmering and sparkling through the trees long before they reached it; and when they

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got nearer, and Michael stopped the horses, the children could hear the waves splash and break upon the beach with a sound that was enough to put one to sleep. Sometimes "the shady road" was chosen, through the woodland, where they rode in a beautiful softened light, with the long shadowy trees thrown across from side to side; where the squirrels ran races up and down the trees, and the wild flowers grew in the deep shade; and the birds started from their wayside nests at the sound of the carriage, and fluttered away and then back as the wheels rolled off.

And then the drive home—with rather more quietness and soberness than they set out—the occasional drooping of little eyelids—the thoughts that came up in little minds about tea and radishes—the way the horses pricked up their ears and trotted on, as they drew near the gate—the stopping there, for Garret to swing back the great barriers—the pause at the front steps—a pause of both body and mind, as it were: how pleasant it all was! And perhaps if Chryssa happened to be particularly sleepy, she didn't open her eyes at all till they got to the house; not even to look at the great button-wood trees by the gate, nor the flowers that grew round the lawn, but sat quite still, her little head nodding about, her ears just hearing the grating of the wheels over the gravel stones, but her eyes not once looking out to see whether they ran over the poppies and johnny-jumpers as well, until Cherry and Dash stopped at the front steps. It did happen, more than once, that Chryssa failed to open her eyes even there, and that Mr. Rutherford had to lift her out of the carriage and carry her into the house and lay her on the sofa, a very sleepy little child indeed. And then Sybil would get a little soft blue shawl to lay over her, and Mrs. Rutherford would shut the blinds a little; and Chryssa knew nothing about that or anything else till she found herself sitting on somebody's lap, and trying very hard to open her eyes. But she usually smiled long before that

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desirable point was attained, just to let people know that she would wake up as soon as she could. And when Sybil said, "Come, Chryssa! don't you want some tea?" Chryssa said "Yes—I think so"—and let her head fall on Mr. Rutherford's shoulder again.

Even on Sunday the children had a ride, but that was only to church; because Ferrytown was too far away for them to walk. So they used to be ready very early, and drive to church; and when they had all got out, Michael took the carriage away to some safe place where Cherry and Dash could be in the shade and out of harm's way, while he went to church too.

Mr. Rutherford's pew was not like those you see now-a-days. It was very large, and square; with high sides painted white except at the top, where there was a mahogany rail: at least the children thought it was mahogany, but I presume it was only stained wood. There were dark purple covered cushions all round the pew, that looked as if a great many people had sat on them and worn them down from their first freshness; and the purple was of so very doubtful a shade, that one could hardly tell whether it was red grown dark, or black grown light, or whether the cushions had always been purple; and they looked too old to remember anything about it themselves. And the hymn-books did not seem a bit younger. There was no doubt about their colour —for towards the top of the covers and along the back there were spots of dark brown leather that seemed almost as fresh as it had ever been; but elsewhere it was worn to a soft light brown, and even the gilt letters on the cover were not very distinct. Yet still the children could read there, "William Rutherford;" and they were never tired of hearing their uncle say that this book was given to their father when he was a little boy; and that this other, so very much worn, which had "Christian Rutherford" written on the fly leaf, had belonged to his mother. There was no need to tell the children to handle them carefully,—they would not have turned down a

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leaf, or held either book except in both hands, for anything in the world. These books seemed to Chryssa so much older than the minister, that it was quite wonderful. She couldn't always understand him very well, and she used to think sometimes that she would much rather read the hymn-books.

"I mean to do it next time," she told Sybil one day. "I think I could keep awake a great deal easier."

"Oh no, you mustn't!" said Sybil seriously.

"Why mayn't I?"

"Because it isn't respectful," said Sybil. "Aunt Esther told me once that when people are talking to you it is very disrespectful not to listen to them."

"But he isn't talking to me," said Chryssa.

"Oh yes he is—he's talking to everybody in the church."

So lest she should be disrespectful, Chrssa used to sit up very straight and try to listen; and then she would slip down off the cushion and sit on her mother's little foot-bench; and when she found herself looking at the little brass nails and perhaps counting them, she would get back on the seat again, and sit up straight as before. And by-and-by she would forget all about the footstool, and the minister, and being respectful, and then she could just feel Mrs. Rutherford taking off her little straw hat and putting her arm round her; and presently Chryssa was fast asleep, with her head in Aunt Esther's lap, and her little feet stretched out on the old purple cushion.

It happened one Sunday that while she was asleep it began to rain; and when at last she sat up and looked out of the church-door that was by the side of the pulpit, there to be sure were rain-drops pattering down at a great rate. Chryssa was very much surprised, and she called out quite loud, "Oh it rains!" and then when she saw all the little girls in the next pew laughing and putting up their books to hide their faces, she hung down her head, and felt very much ashamed, and afraid she had done something very disrespectful.

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When they came out of the pew there were always plenty of people to shake hands with, so that the going down the aisle was a rather slow affair. There was one lady in particular whom Chryssa used to notice, because she was always there—in the same bonnet, and shawl, and parasol, and the same curls inside of her bonnet, which never got shaken down in the least; and she always came forward just at the same time and place to shake hands with Mrs. Rutherford; Chryssa thought she must be a very good person.

The ride home was pleasant, though it was through the hot sun; but the children had little green parasols, with green fringe and white tops and handles, and of course nobody could mind the sun under them.

When they reached home, Mrs. Rutherford used to let the children lie down on the bed till dinner-time, if they felt tired, and almost always they took a book to read. Sometimes Sybil picked out an easy story in "The Lady of the Manor," for Chryssa, but generally she chose one of her own little books, "The Millennium," or "Nathan Dickerman," or "Anna Ross." The "Millennium" was a great favourite. Not that Chryssa could understand all the talk about "wool, hair, and feathers," or some other things there related; but she liked to read the description of the beautiful feathers of the blue jay, and of the young mountain ash (she thought their own couldn't be the right kind), and of the basket covered with silver paper—the children's walk to the village—and of their good friend: she did not wonder at all that the children loved him.

They never went to church in the afternoon—it was so far that there was not time after dinner. But they had Bible lessons at home, and there were hymns that Chryssa liked to read and to learn, and sometimes she learned verses in the Bible. Once when she asked for something to learn, Mrs. Rutherford told her to choose some verses out of the fifth chapter of Matthew. Chryssa found the place, and then she thought she would be very

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clever and learn the whole chapter, so she began with great spirit, but by the time she had learned eight or ten verses she was as tired as a little child need be. Before tea both the children used to read aloud to their uncle, and then he would explain the chapters to them, and tell them about their father and mother, how they were willing to leave all and go to Christ; and had wished but one thing for their little children; that they might love and serve him too.

It happened one Sunday that Mr. Rutherford had a headache all day, and could not hear the reading; but when Chryssa and Sybil came to bid him good-night he kept hold of their hands and said, "Who has read in the Bible to-day?"

There was a minute's silence—then Chryssa said in her grave childish way, "I have read six chapters;" and she noticed and long remembered her uncle's peculiar smile, though at the time she did not quite understand it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WET STRAWBERRIES.

To drive to the ferry for Mr. Rutherford or to walk a part of the way to meet the carriage was a very common expedition, and one much liked by the children. There was alway a little hurry and bustle about getting off so as to be sure and be in time, and then the wheels rolled so smoothly and the horses trotted so fast, that even when the dust blew and the sun shone into their eyes nobody minded it. For as Sybil said, they could turn their heads toward the other side where the sun didn't

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shine, and as for the dust—why they could wash their faces when they got home: they were going to meet Uncle Ruth, and that was enough.

One day as they went pleasantly along, Chryssa began—

"Aunt Esther, please will you tell me about my little waggon and about Sybil's going to Cleaveland?"

"Don't you recollect it, Chryssa? I thought your memory went back as far as that."

"Oh yes, I remember it very well, but I like to hear you tell the story so much."

"I think she does tell it 'so much,'" said Sybil.

"Why, Sybil! I haven't heard it for a long time! not since last winter I am sure. And Aunt Esther always tells it so nicely."

"Well, then," said Mrs. Rutherford, "it was fine summer weather—"

"Like this?"

"Warmer than this; and Sybil had not been well, and Mrs. Salisbury thought it would do her good to go to Cleaveland."

"I don't wonder she thought so," said Chryssa. "It's so pleasant at Cleaveland. And grandmama came for Sybil, didn't she?"

"Grandmama came in the coach."

"She spent the day here—I remember that," said Sybil.

"Yes, she spent the day here, and after tea she was going to take you away. But when the coach came to the door, and you went down the steps with your bonnet on, Chryssa began to cry and said you should not go—that she would not let you."

"And what did Uncle Ruth do?" said Chryssa.

"Uncle Ruth took you up in his arms and tried to comfort you, and told you that Sybil would be back in a few days."

"And did I stop crying?"

"No, you cried harder than ever, and declared she

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should not go. And at last he promised that if she went, you should have a little waggon to play with instead. And you looked up and said, 'What, Uncle Ruth?' and then your head went down again on his shoulder. But you listened to what he said and got a little more quiet, though there were very big drops in your eyes as the carriage drove off."

Chryssa laughed heartily. "How very funny!" she said. "I wouldn't take a waggon for her now, though."

"No, you'd have to let me go without anything, I should think," said Sybil.

"And is that the same little waggon I've got now?"

"The very same."

"What a nice one it is," said Chryssa, "I love that little waggon."

And now the salt breezes began to meet and refresh them, for the carriage was approaching Ferrytown; and presently Michael stopped the horses by the little wharf where the boat came in. She was not there yet, but they could see her paddling on towards them, and long before she was near enough to let them see anybody, the children were sure they saw Mr. Rutherford. The boat came nearer and nearer, and then to be sure they did see him, with a basket in his hand, standing there and smiling at them. Then careless people began to jump ashore before the boat was made fast; and the boatman fastened the chain and began to wind it up on his great wheel; and people a little more careful than the first, jumped over the great bar at the end of the boat. Then the bar was taken away, and everybody hurried off to be out of the way of the horses, who were very eager for their turn. And then they came tramping out of the boat, making a great noise and clatter, while Mr. Rutherford's horses were trotting off to Rose-hill, as fast as their feet could carry them. For a few minutes the sharp sound of their shoes rang out from the paving stones of the main street of the little village, and brought to the doors the few children that were not already there.

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Meantime, the sun was getting lower and lower, and shone into the carriage with pleasant smiles that troubled nobody's eyes and lit up everybody's cheeks—which indeed were bright enough already.

"How nice those radishes look!" said Chryssa, as they passed some shops where the long red bunches lay piled together.

"They look better than they would taste, I suspect," said her aunt; "radishes are not always good at this time of year."

"What time of year is it?"

"To-morrow will be the first of June."

"Will it?" said Chryssa. "Oh then we shall have some strawberries."

"What makes you think you will have strawberries to-morrow?" said Mr. Rutherford with a smile.

"Because, Uncle Ruth, when I asked Aunt Esther when strawberries would be ripe, she said in June, and to-morrow is June, and I mean to look for them *very* early to-morrow morning."

"I am not sure that you will find any, however," said Mrs. Rutherford, "for it will be only the first day of June, and the weather has not been very hot."

"Well, I can look," said Chryssa. But, behold! when the morning came there were rain-drops instead of strawberries; and they fell in such abundance that the children could not set foot out of doors. It was an extraordinary thing to see clouds and falling rain, and little streams of water trickling down the window panes on the first day of June, Chryssa thought; and even Sybil watched the rain two or three times as if she supposed it did not like to be looked at, and would therefore remain in the clouds if she remained at the window.

"What do you think about it, Syb?" said her sister, jumping up to follow Sybil and put her little arms round her. "Won't it clear up?"

"It will not clear up for your looking, Chryssa," said her aunt. "If you come away from the window, and

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do your lessons, the morning will seem much the shorter."

"But, Aunt Esther, I have got strawberry in my lesson to-day; and if I say it over and over till I can spell it, I shall long for them worse than ever."

"No worse than if you stand there and *think* it over and over."

"Well, what shall I read to-day, Aunt Esther?"

"I think I shall find you something about the African deserts, to teach you the value of clouds and rain."

"Well!" said Chryssa again—"I don't believe it will make me like it to-day, still."

"Perhaps there are no strawberries ripe," said Sybil. "I mean to believe that; as the fox thought the grapes were sour."

"He was a very foolish fox, I think," said Chryssa. "I dare say he didn't think so at all. Aunt Esther, do you want me to be like the fox?—do you want me to think there are no ripe strawberries?"

"No, I would rather see you bear patiently the thought that there are; though I am by no means sure of the fact. But it would be a pity if we could not be contented *one* day more without strawberries."

"But perhaps it will rain to-morrow."

"Perhaps it will," said Mrs. Rutherford, looking up with a very sunshiny, catching smile.

"Now, Aunt Esther, what makes you laugh?"

"What makes you laugh?"

"Why because you look so funny," said Chryssa.

"But wouldn't it be sad if it should rain to-morrow?"

"Why no, love—it would be good,—everything is good that God orders. And now it would be good if my little Chryssa were to pick up that neglected geography which lies on the floor, and make some use of it."

Lessons went on accordingly. Then came dinner; then Chryssa began to copy a letter, while Mrs. Rutherford sat by and directed.

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"Take care, Chryssa—you don't want that last letter."

"But I thought you said, C, a, k,—"

"C, a, is pronounced like the letter k;—I did not mean you to put that down too."

"Will you please to scratch it out then," said Chryssa. "There's one good thing about making mistakes—it gives me such a nice little rest." And then shrugging up her shoulders she said with a long breath,—

"I'm so tired; and I haven't run about one bit to-day."

"That is the very reason you are tired. Come, you shall not write any more: get Sybil to go and ride on the wooden horse with you."

Sybil was soon found and very ready for play of any kind; so with one more hopeless look at the weather, the children proceeded upstairs to the garret,—their play-room when the sky-roofed one had taken to itself an under roofing of clouds or a wet floor.

The garret was large and light, with many little oval windows, where the spiders flourished and flies met their fate; and whose dusty panes gave a very gloomy view of things. On one side of the garret a locked door shut off various stored away articles from busy hands and eyes: on another a ladder led up to a kind of open loft, the landing-place on the way to the sky-light. It was a queer looking dark region up there, with bits of lumber, old chairs, and an immense piece of pitch pine poking themselves out from the obscurity. Nobody ever went up there,—only once Chryssa could remember seeing her aunt follow Garret up the ladder when the kitchen chimney had amused itself by making a bonfire, and everybody was afraid that the roof would follow the example.

But down below, in the garret itself, all was bright enough, despite the cobwebbed windows. In the middle hung a fine swing, securely fastened to one of the beams; close by stood the wooden horse; a hook and ring were on one of the upright timbers; and at one end of the

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garret, dolls and tin dishes marked out a more special play-room.

To-day the swing claimed first attention; and as the wide seat would admit them both, Chryssa climbed in and placed herself with her face towards the doll end of the garret, while Sybil turned her looks in the opposite direction, and then making great efforts she touched the ground with her toes again and again till the swing began to move, after which a very little push kept it going fast enough. And then they both began to sing:—

"Swing, swing! as high as you can!
Hold fast of the rope and don't be afraid;
The rafter is wide,
And the rope is well tied,
And the knots and the seat are carefully made.

"Play, play! it's pleasant to play,
It's pleasant to laugh, and pleasant to sing.
And though it does rain,
We will not complain—
People ought to be happy without everything."

"How nice the dolls look!" said Chryssa, when they had gone through the air once or twice in silence.

"Yes, they look pretty well," said Sybil with a contemplative air. "I don't know either, Chryssa—it strikes me that Miss Jenkins wants bleeding—just look at her arms."

"But they're always that colour," said Chryssa; "if you were to bleed her ever so much you couldn't make her arms white."

"I don't care," said Sybil, "I'm going to try."

And down she jumped, and seized Miss Jenkins, whose arms were of a very decided pink kid.

"Now I shall take this big pin for a lancet," said Sybil, "and you can hold that little wooden pail, Chryssa, instead of a basin."

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"But the little wooden pail's got beads in it," said Chryssa.

"Turn them out there into that tin box. Come!"

A few pointed applications of the pin to the pink kid plainly showed what the inside of Miss Jenkins' arm was made of; for some grains of bran began to sprinkle the bottom of the little wooden pail, and the doll's arm did not indeed grow less pink, but much less round and hard than it had been before.

"Her arms won't be alike now," said Chryssa. "What will you do with this one?—it don't look pretty."

"Oh, I don't know," said Sybil; "never mind. Stuff it."

How long they might have played and talked in the garret is uncertain—for at this moment it received a most unexpected visitor in the shape of a long sunbeam. During their play the weather had been gradually improving, and at length this one ray escaped from its cloudy prison and lit up all in its way. The cloud, the wet tree tops, the glittering blades of grass, the dusty garret window and its brown timbers, and the intent little faces that bent over Miss Jenkins. Down went the doll, regardless of consequences—down went both children to the parlour.

"What in the world is the matter?" exclaimed Mrs. Rutherford, as Sybil burst in. "Has Chryssa fallen out of the swing?"

"Oh no, ma'am, not at all; but don't you see that sunbeam?"

"I see more than one; but what then?"

"Why, the strawberries," said Chryssa, her breath just enough for those three words.

"Strawberries! And how are you to get at them? the grass is as wet as possible."

"But they're not in the grass," said Sybil.

"But they are in their own vines, which is just as bad."

And the sunbeam faded again.

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"Well," said Mrs. Rutherford, after a little pause, "I believe I must try what I can do. Get my overshoes, Sybil, and you, Chryssa, a basket."

"Mayn't I get two?" said Chryssa. "Mayn't I go with you?"

But this could not be; and as the next best thing, they ran up and seated themselves on the stairs by the passage window, to watch their aunt, and consider the question of her bringing home the basket full, or half full, or empty. Also, whether she got a ripe strawberry every time she stooped down, or whether her hand dived in among the wet leaves to no purpose but that of a cold bath.

"I am *sure* she got one that time," said Chryssa.

"No, she didn't; I was watching the basket all the while."

"But you can't see it."

"Yes I can—down there on the walk."

"Oh, I see," said Chryssa. "Perhaps she put one in her mouth then. Oh, I wish I was there!—*that* was one—I saw it!"

"How carefully Aunt Esther holds up her frock," said Sybil; "it cannot get wet at all. There, she's coming back; I daresay she's tired with poking about in those wet beds. Don't go down yet, Chryssa; wait till she gets under the window, and then we can look right into the basket. Oh, dear! why does she stop to look at that laburnum?"

"It's very pretty, I'm sure," said Chryssa. "Oh, let me open the window one minute—I must. Aunt Esther, *please* bring me a May rose! (they're June roses, I think). Don't get your feet wet. Did you get any strawberries?"

"No wonder she laughs," said Sybil. "She can't scream out answers to all your questions, child."

"She nodded her head though, if she did laugh," said Chryssa "Oh, I can see the strawberries! look, Sybil,

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Chryssa and Sybil watching their Aunt Esther, p. 80.

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how red the basket is! She's got a great many! Come, let's go," and away she ran.

"Ah! please hold the basket down, Aunt Esther, because I can't see. How good you were to go! I'm so much obliged to you. What a quantity you've got."

"I did not bring your rose, Chryssa," said Mrs. Rutherford; "there was so much wet grass between me and the rosebushes that I thought it best not to venture."

"I'm very glad you didn't, dear Aunty; the strawberries will do for one night, I should think. But shan't we keep them till Uncle Ruth comes home, and then eat them all together?"

"With all my heart; I don't think there are enough to hurt us if we do eat them 'all together,'" said her aunt.

Whether Chryssa thought that the words spoke some doubt of the wholesomeness of strawberries in general, or of these in particular, certain it is that she looked very soberly into the little basket as she walked off to set it in the pantry.

CHAPTER V.

HEADACHE AND LOCUST FLOWERS.

And for several days they were very busy and happy; for the strawberries ripened fast and little fingers and baskets made frequent visits to the beds. But one morning—whether it was that she had been too much in the hot sun, or had eaten too many strawberries, or both—Chryssa got up with a headache.

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"You couldn't have gone out much to-day, any way," said Sybil, "for it rained last night, and the grass is all wet."

"Well," said Chryssa, with a rather long breath, "but I wish my head didn't ache."

"I tell you what," said Sybil, "we'll go and sit in the bath house."

"I don't think I want to go," said Chryssa.

"And I doubt very much whether you should go," said Mrs. Rutherford.

"But, Aunt Esther, fresh air is good for a headache; and I've got a great deal to tell you, Chryssa—you'd better come. I'm going to take my pillow-case there to hem."

"Well, I'll go," said Chryssa, though rather doubtfully. "Maybe it won't make my head any worse." And putting on her sun-bonnet she went slowly down the flagged walk to the bathing-house—a little square building with a window and a door, and a green shower-bath overhead. Thither Sybil's quicker steps had already brought her; and she was sewing very busily when Chryssa came in and placed herself on a bench at her feet.

"What did you want to tell me, Sybil?" she said, wearily.

"What do you think?—come, guess."

"Oh no, indeed I can't, you must tell me."

"Well, then, Mary says that her cousin has got ever so many little kittens, and she says the next time she goes to Canterbury she'll get us two."

Chryssa did smile in spite of her headache.

"I'm very glad! how nice it will be. You'll have one and I'll have the other. And, oh, Sybil, what colour will they be? do you think they'll be both alike?"

"I don't know—I told her not to get black ones if she could help it, but I suppose she'll have to take what her cousin gives her."

"I'm very glad," said Chryssa again, as she sat prese-

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ing one little hand on each side of her face, "but I must go into the house, my head aches so. I can't stay here."

"And I will go too," said Sybil, "it's hot here, and then you can lie down."

By the time they reached the parlour, Michael had got back from town; and he came and stood in the parlour door and said very gravely—

"Miss Errick is dead, ma'am.

There was a general exclamation, for this acquaintance of theirs had been quite well when they last heard from her. But Michael could tell them no particulars; he had merely heard the news, and that Mr. Rutherford was to go to the funeral that afternoon.

It would pass along the road, and when it was first seen from the windows, the children went down and stood under the willow-tree where they could watch the procession.

As they stood there silent and sober, Garret came up; and after standing by them a few minutes he broke off a willow twig, and sitting down on the dog-house, he began to twist and weave a ring for Chryssa's middle finger. Then he made one for Sybil, and then both children begged him to teach them this new kind of goldsmith work. But by the time it was learned Chryssa's head grew worse again, and she grew pale and was obliged to go up-stairs and lie down on the bed.

The west windows were open, and as the child lay there looking out and breathing the sweet air, she thought—in most unphilosophical language certainly—that nothing out of doors looked as if it had the headache. It was odd, too, that this thought rather soothed her own; it was like some soft cool hand upon her hot forehead.

"What smells so sweet, Aunt Esther?" she said.

"The locust flowers."

"Oh, are they out?" said Chryssa, half raising her-

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self, "and I wanted so much to see them! What do they look like?"

"Like the laburnam flowers except in colour. Don't you see something very white on that tree at the end of the grove?"

"Yes," said Chryssa, sinking back, "I think I do, but the sun is so bright. Are there many flowers out?"

"Not a great many; the trees are young yet."

"Won't you tell me about the flowers, Aunt Esther.

"What shall I tell you?" said her aunt, smiling. "They are perfectly pure white, almost transparent, as pure as all Christians will be when they come to heaven—'without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' And they are very, very sweet; sending their perfume to a great distance. And so, Chryssie, when God's children are what they ought to be, when they love Him and do his will, all their influence is like the fragrance of those locust flowers. It makes the very name of Christian sweet; it spreads abroad through the world, drawing everybody towards what is 'lovely and of good report.'"

"Did Uncle Ruth plant all those trees?" said Chryssa, after a little while.

"Yes."

And then she lay quite still for some time.

There Mr. Rutherford found her when he came home, with her head on the pillow, and the warm sunshine falling over her feet.

"I am very sorry your head aches, my darling," he said, bending down to kiss her.

"Yes, Uncle Ruth—Oh, it will be better by-and-by."

"How pleasant it is to think that in heaven there will be 'no more pain, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more death,'" said he.

Chryssa smiled, and a little flush came over her face.

"Papa never has headaches now," she said.

"Shall I read to you, Chryssa?" said her uncle, a moment after.

"If you please, Uncle Ruth, if it won't tire you.

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There is 'Idle Hours' on the bed; I tried to read, but it hurt my eyes."

And Mr. Rutherford read the story of "Little Zoe," and of her being sick, and such a good child. And by-and-by Chryssa began to think that she was sick — and then that she was a bee humming about that very bunch of locust flowers on which the sun had shone so brightly; and then—she opened her eyes and found that she had been asleep, and that the sun was down and the tea-bell ringing. And there on the bed lay the bunch of locust flowers.

"Your head must be better," said Mrs. Rutherford, smiling at the eagerness with which the child threw herself upon that sweet tribute from the woods.

"Oh yes," said Chryssa. "Oh how sweet these are! How could Uncle Ruth get them? I thought the tree was too high."

"That bunch was on the end of a bough that hung down within reach. But come, tea is ready."

And lifting her off the bed, for she looked a little pale yet, Mrs. Rutherford brushed her hair till it looked something like a sunbeam itself, and then they went down to tea.

"May I eat any strawberries?" said Chryssa, as she saw the heaped-up glass dish which stood on the table.

"Not to-night, I think."

And going round to the corner of the table next her aunt, Chryssa stood there with the locust flowers in one hand and a soda biscuit in the other, seasoning the second with the first, and now and then casting a look at the strawberries.

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CHAPTER VI.

WHAT SHALL I GIVE?

SYBIL'S birthday was at hand; and some hearts were full of expectation, and many heads of preparation for its coming. Company was invited, and rooms were arranged, and white frocks were spotlessly done up. Moreover, Aunt Esther made some of her sponge cake —such as nobody else could make—at least so thought Chryssa, who had watched the making, and baking and icing, with perfect pleasure and content. It was such a big cake too—the whole size of the baking-pan—little pound cakes by the side of it made small show; only the piece of citron in each stuck up its head as much as to say "*I* am good," while everybody must admire the hearts, and diamonds, and rounds, and ovals, in which they were baked. Then the loaves of bread looked so brown, and smelled so sweet; and china and glass dishes looked so pleasant and sociable as they came out of the pantry. One would have supposed they had been new gilt for the occasion, and had never looked bright before.

"Aunt Esther," said Sybil, the afternoon before the important Tuesday, "you won't forget my wreath?"

"What wreath?"

"Why, you promised to make me a wreath for my birthday!" said Sybil, throwing down her book. "Don't you remember?"

"Mayn't I have a wreath, too?" said Chryssa.

"No, of course not," said Sybil. "You can have a wreath on your own birthday; you don't want one on mine; it would be foolish."

Chryssa looked a little disappointed.

"I don't see that, Sybil," said Mrs. Rutherford: "I

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may as well dress Chryssa with flowers in honour of your birthday, as the vases in the drawing-room. I can easily make the wreaths of different flowers, and put some distinguishing mark upon yours, that nobody may doubt who is the queen of the day."

"I don't care about being a queen if there are too many princesses," said Sybil. "I shan't have a wreath if everybody else has."

"But I'm not going to have one," said Chryssa. "Aunt Esther's going to make only one, for you."

"Or only two," said her aunt.

"You needn't make two," said Sybil, significantly, and the subject was dropped for a few minutes. Then the discontented little lady began again.

"I think it's very stupid for two people to be wearing wreaths. And why should Chryssa have one? It isn't her birthday—she has nothing to do with it."

"Oh, Sybil!" said Chryssa. "You know I always enjoy it very much."

"Well then, you'll be happy enough without a wreath."

"That is neither kind nor wise," said Mrs. Rutherford."

"I don't care," was the reply; and Sybil's mood ended in a flood of tears. Nor were hers the only tears, for very sympathising and imploring drops were in Chryssa's eyes as well. But they only aggravated Sybil's displeasure.

"What are you crying for?" she said. "Aunt Esther hasn't been scolding *you*—I do wish you wouldn't do everything that I do."

Mrs. Rutherford looked at her watch.

"We are going to walk on the high road, Sybil," she said; "if you wish to go, you must get ready at once."

She went upstairs, followed by Chryssa, who had just lingered one minute to beg her sister to come—"she couldn't go without her."

And Sybil did come, but she was so long in putting on her things that the others were half-way to the gate before she made her appearance. She stood in the hall,

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door for a moment and then called out, "Aunt Esther, won't you come back and tie my bonnet? It's in a knot and it's too loose."

"I will tie it if you will come here," said her aunt.

"May I go back and do it?" said Chryssa.

"No," said Mrs. Rutherford; and after standing for a moment as still on the walk as was Sybil in the hall-door, they turned and walked on, though Chryssa almost walked backwards, so constant was her desire to watch the door. But the same dismal-looking little figure stood there yet, as long as she could see it.

Chryssa walked on with a very heavy heart, and two or three little sighs were heard that were quite out of keeping with the song of the birds in the hedge. She was thinking what a pleasant walk they might have had; and now she didn't want to walk at all, but would rather have been at home.

They had reached the road, and Chryssa's little feet were going very thoughtfully along in the dust, when a loud noise on the other side of the road made her start and squeeze Mrs. Rutherford's hand with all her might. She looked across. A little blue cloud of smoke was just blowing away, and a little boy-neighbour of theirs was walking along and looking at her. In his hand he held a little brass cannon, and while Chryssa looked, it was loaded and fired off for the second time.

Now the noise was certainly not very tremendous, and Mrs. Rutherford assured Chryssa they were in no danger of being shot, but the little cannon did full execution nevertheless. Chryssa put Mrs. Rutherford between her and the mischief-maker, and then she walked on in alternate fear and fright; for the cannon was loaded and fired just as fast as Master Theodore's fingers could manage that operation.

"Theodore," said Mrs. Rutherford at length, "don't you know that you frighten this little girl very much?"

Theodore looked at her but made no answer, except that a little smile on his face seemed to say he had sus-

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pected as much before, and another discharge followed immediately. Chryssa was forced to stand fire, till to her great joy they turned a corner which Master Theodore did not.

"Aunt Esther," said Chryssa presently, "please don't tell Mrs. Delue."

"Why not?"

"Because—I don't know," said Chryssa, "but I wish you wouldn't. Oh, see! Aunt Esther, there comes the carriage, and there's Henry too!"

Henry was there, in truth, and not long either; for in some mysteriously quick way he was out of the carriage and had his arms round his mother's neck in all manner of joy and delight.

"And here's one of the young ones," he said at length, taking her up in his arms. "How do you do, Chrysocoma? Are you glad to see me?"

"Yes, I'm very glad," said Chryssa laughing. "But what makes you call me so."

"I didn't call you 'so'—I called you Chrysocoma."

"Well, what does that mean?" said Chryssa, laying her face close to his, by which means her hat fell off.

"Why, it means 'golden locks,' said Henry as he jumped into the carriage, still holding her fast. "You look as if you had rolled your head about in the sunshine."

Chryssa laughed, and laid her head back against him with an air of great content.

"Harry, we're going to have two kittens," she said.

"Two kittens! why we had two before."

"But I mean real kittens."

"For me to play with?"

"No, not for you, for me and Sybil—at least for Sybil and me."

And at the thought of Sybil, Chryssa became grave again, and her eyes fell. But only as far as the cushion, for there they saw a thin package which looked suspiciously like a book.

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"Take it up and open it, Chryssie," said Mr. Rutherford, smiling. "It's for you."

"For me?" said Chryssa. "Oh, thank you, Uncle Ruth!" and her little fingers were soon busy with the twine.

"But, oh, you forgot!" she said, stopping short when one knot was untied, "you forgot, Uncle Ruth—it isn't my birthday, it's Sybil's."

"And can't people ever have presents except on their birthdays?" said her uncle smiling.

"Why yes," said Chryssa, untying knot number two and knot number three, "but I didn't expect it. But haven't you got something for Sybil?"

"We'll see when to-morrow comes."

And Chryssa untied the last knot with a better satisfied look, which changed into one of great pleasure as she beheld a little square blue Peter Parley's First Book of History; especially as she felt quite sure that the brown paper in her uncle's lap could contain nothing but a present.

They had a merry tea-drinking that night; even Sybil laughed and talked almost as usual; though there was now and then a shade upon her face that her uncle knew must come from some unseen cloud. After tea, when the others had gone out into the garden, and she yet stood rather moodily by the window, Mr. Rutherford came and sat down by her, and drawing her down upon his lap he kissed her, and asked her if she was glad to be so near eleven years old.

"I don't know, Uncle Ruth," said Sybil, her eyes filling fast at his kind words,—"I thought I should be glad."

"And how comes it that you are not?" said he gently.

"I don't know," said Sybil again, and still looking out of the window. "I believe I was cross to-day, and it isn't pleasant to be cross on one's birthday, and I wish it was any other day in the year, I'm sure."

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"But instead of trying to get rid of the day, hadn't we better get rid of being cross?" said her uncle.

"But I can't," said Sybil. "You see, Uncle Ruth, Aunt Esther promised to make me a wreath to wear to-morrow; and then what must Chryssa do but want one too. And Aunt Esther thinks she ought to have it, and I say it's very stupid; and it makes me cross whenever I think of it."

"Well, let us leave that for a while," said her uncle, "and go back to something you said a minute ago. Why is it particularly disagreeable to be cross on one's birthday? It is certainly so, but why?"

"Because one ought to be particularly good, I suppose," said Sybil.

"And why ought one?"

Sybil hesitated, and her uncle spoke again.

"There was once a child travelling along a road where there were a great many toll-gates. Her home lay at the end of the road, and all along, from gate to gate, the way was sometimes pleasant, and sometimes difficult; yet had she written directions for her journey, which if followed would 'make the rough places smooth,' and give her always 'straight paths for her feet.' Now these toll-gates were in reality all at the same distance apart, yet they did not seem so. For a while they seemed so far from each other that it was quite an event to reach one, and quite an amusement to pay the toll; and the little traveller marched up with quick steps and laid down a book, or a plaything, or some childish clothing. And the old man at the gate always gave something in return; a few trifles at first, with which the child was so pleased that she noticed not one little light straw which the old man bound upon her shoulders; and each one added another straw.

"Several of these gates were passed, and yet the child had hardly looked back; but one day it came into her heart to stop and think; and sitting down just before

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the next gate, she looked over all the road she had come It looked very small, and she had thought it so long.

"'That is the first gate I remember,' she said to herself; 'and when I came to the next one it rained, and the man gave me two straws to carry, and not much else. And between that and the next one I was so very sick, and it tired me to go on. But God let me live and not die, and he has taken care of me every bit of the way.'

"She turned then and looked forward over the road she had to go. But she could not see much of it; she could not even count the gates, though she thought she saw a great many. And a wish came over her that God would guide her past them as he had hitherto done; and then she began to think within herself what she should lay down at the next gate, for it was very near. Some childish habit or dress or plaything did not seem enough, she was thinking less of herself now, for she thought of these words, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' And remembering the disciples who left all to follow Christ, she prayed that at this next gate she might lay down every evil word and work, and give herself wholly unto the Lord, to be His dear child, His willing servant, for ever."

The last rays of the sun were falling upon Sybil's head as her uncle spoke these last words, but she heeded them not. Her head was upon his breast, and she was sobbing out tears of sorrow and shame and better purposes. The crossness was all gone now, and only a little sore pain about her heart told that it had ever been.

"Shall we lay down all this?" whispered her uncle; "and take up and bear the name of Christ with earnest prayer and endeavour to be changed into His likeness?"

"*We*, Uncle Ruth?" she said, looking up in some surprise.

"We, love. You at your gate, and I at mine."

"But what have you to lay down, Uncle Ruth?" said Sybil. "Do people *always* lay down something?"

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"Always; through their whole life. I have laid down many a thing at these gates, Sybil; a dear friend sometimes, and sometimes I trust a little of my own self-will. Or if not, remember this, if nothing evil is laid down, then do we lose something good; if we are no nearer to God than we were last year, then are we further off; and we have not merely lost the year, but we have fallen back in our way to heaven."

"And what does the man at the gate give you, Uncle Ruth?" said Sybil, laying her hand caressingly upon his face.

"Different things," said he, smiling. "Two little daughters to love, and better hopes for them, and of them. When he can find nothing else he throws down a little snow on my head."

"Oh, Uncle Ruth! he shall not!" and Sybil's arms were clasped tight round her uncle's neck.

"And do you like to look forward to the other gates?" she said presently.

"I like to look over them. I am not careful about their number now, dear Sybil, for the heavenly country is better than this."

Sybil looked up and kissed him with very tremulous lips.

"I will try," she whispered, and then she broke from him and ran up-stairs.

CHAPTER VII.

SYBIL'S BIRTHDAY.

THE sun rose amid some rather doubtful-looking gray clouds, but the wind soon swept them away—even while

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Janet and her broom went through the parlours for the last time. There was not a particle of dust nor of cloud to be seen. And when the sun got higher and poured in its bright light, everything looked clean,—as clean as Sybil had prayed last night that her heart might be, and as she hoped it had really become. Poor child! she did not know how soon the world's dust would find its way in again, or indeed how much there was yet remaining. Only "he that is dead is freed from sin."

"Come, children! get up!" clamoured Henry at their door. "The sun's up, though it isn't his birthday."

"And I shan't get up, if it is mine," said the half-awake Sybil.

"I say Sybil!" pursued Henry, "why didn't you come to meet us last night? I forgot to ask you."

"That's nobody' business," said Sybil. "I didn't choose to come."

"Don't let off all your fireworks this morning," said Henry, "I advise you. Keep them for to-night. They don't make much show in such sunshine."

Sybil started up in desperation, but now opening her eyes for the first time, the light they met silenced her. What sunshine it was! as if it came from the world beyond all those gates she must pass through. They were very sorrowful eyes that she hid again in the pillow.

Then came another knock at the door.

"Where's Chrysocoma? Is she asleep too?"

"Oh no, she's not asleep," said Chryssa in a just audible whisper.

"Let her come forth then."

"You'd better go, Chryssie," said Sybil, "only don't pick the flowers for our wreaths till I come."

"Are we going to have wreaths?" exclaimed Chryssa. "At least I mean are you going to have one?"

"Yes, and so are you."

Chryssa bestowed two or three very thankful kisses upon the back of Sybil's neck and went off.

"Why don't Sybil come?" was Henry's first greeting.

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"I don't know," said Chryssa,—"I think she is tired. And she is not dressed."

"That's a reason. But as to being tired, people are always tired when they ought to get up."

"But I am sure she is tired," said Chryssa, "she looks so. And I don't think she liked what you said about fireworks."

"I don't believe you did," said Henry laughing. "Ah, Chrysocoma! I couldn't think what made you look so grave at me this morning. But I won't tease her any more, and I'll beg her pardon for that—if she ever gets up so as to give me a chance."

After breakfast, the first thing was to pick flowers, which the children did in no measured quantity; and Chryssa having filled her basket, filled her little apron as well, chiefly with poppies, for which the basket had found no room.

"My dear Chryssa!" said Mrs. Rutherford, "what am I to do with so many poppies? If I were to put them all in the dish there would be place for nothing else."

"But the wreaths," said Chryssa.

"But I don't believe poppy wreaths would be pretty."

"Oh, Aunt Esther, if you'd just been out on the gravel-walk, you'd have seen how pretty they looked."

"In the gravel-walk, yes—but on your head?"

"If you have a poppy wreath, Chryssa," said Henry, "you'll have to sit in the corner all day and nod."

Chryssa looked very puzzled till her eyes got down to her apron again,—then they brightened up.

"Just look at this little red one, Aunt Esther—it's so black in the middle,—and here's another that's purple. I don't know I'm sure what Harry means by nodding, but I think they're beautiful."

"You don't know what I mean by nodding?" said Henry—"look here then and I'll show you,"—which he did till Chryssa nearly dropped the whole apron full of poppies for laughing.

"Well, if I put enough poppies in the vases you'll let

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me make the wreaths as I like?" said Mrs. Rutherford when Henry's head was persuaded to remain quiet.

"Oh yes—unless"—said Chryssa, hesitating, "unless you would put just this one poppy bud in mine. See, Aunt Esther, it's white, and the leaves aren't open yet."

That one was promised, and then Mrs. Rutherford began to arrange dishes, and vases, and flower tables; now and then to lay aside some particularly pretty bud or leaf for the wreaths. When the making of these came, it was hard to tell whether the children were most pleased or curious. It was pretty work. The flowers were so fresh and smelled so sweet, and Mrs. Rutherford's hand was so skilful. It was wonderful to see her fasten down the stems so neatly, and then to see a leaf start up as if by magic to cover the joining; while a white jessamine poked out its head here and a rosebud there, just as if they had sense, and knew where they were wanted. And satisfaction was complete when, the hair on both little heads being nicely brushed, the wreaths were put on and fitted exactly. Chryssa thought Sybil's looked "splendid" and took it for granted, that her own could not be far behind: the white poppy bud at least, must look well.

It took some time to get used to such unusual adornments; there seemed to be danger of their falling off, for as Chryssa remarked, "What could keep them on?" and the first going down-stairs was a very stately affair. But both heads and wreaths were happily forgotten after awhile.

Their friends began to come about twelve o'clock, and many of them brought Sybil some little present—a painted pincushion or a basket. One or two were so thoughtful as to bring Chryssa some trifle also, which, not being expected, was particularly welcome. As for Sybil, she cared less about them, having found her plate at breakfast loaded with presents that she liked better—the brown paper especially having contained a most beautiful book. But she received the last arrivals gra-

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ciously enough, and returned to her book with new pleasure.

Many of the guests were grown-up people—as much out of Chryssa's sphere as she was out of theirs; so, after speaking to them all, she took possession of the only little child of the party (who was indeed somewhat smaller than herself), and took her out upon the lawn to see the flowers. Chryssa found it hard work. Little Emily knew none of her old friends in the borders, nor seemed to wish to make their acquaintance. She would not say whether she thought the pink or the blue bachelor's-buttons were the prettiest; she walked right over the poppies in the walk, pulled up the johnny-jumpers, and was perfectly insensible to the charms of "love in a puzzle."

Chryssa was in despair.

"Shall we go and see Garret mow?" she said, directing little Emily's eyes and ears towards Garret and his scythe.

The immediate answer was the deliberate march of Miss Emily's red shoes over the border, taking moss pink and what other trifles there were in her way. But when she came a little nearer to Garret she stopped short, perfectly sure that the scythe was to be employed to destroy her peace and well-being; and when Chryssa, by the more round-about road, had reached her, she was crying in great dismay. All comforting assurances were of no effect, and Chryssa marched her off into the house again. Then she herself came out to have a run among the cut grass, and to watch the flying grasshoppers with their pretty yellow wings, and the birds that came all the way from the hedge to pick up every one that was small enough.

Then Chryssa noticed the drooping white flower heads that lay in the swathe.

"What makes you cut down the daisies, Garret?" she said. "And here are some buttercups too. Oh, Garret! that's too bad."

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"Why, Miss Chryssa, they aint flowers — they're nothing in life but weeds."

"What makes weeds, I wonder," said Chryssa; "why aren't they just as good as any flowers, Garret?"

This was more than Garret could tell, so he shifted the question.

"You see, Miss Chryssa, they grow among the grass so—I couldn't let 'em stand if I wanted to. If I was to mow round every bunch of daisies," he added, shaking his head, "they'd be gone to seed by the time I got through, and you'd be grown up, Miss Chryssa."

"No I shouldn't," said Chryssa, gravely. "Uncle Ruth says you mow very fast, Garret; and it would take me a great while to grow up."

"Then we'll have a beautiful young lady here," said Garret.

"Oh, I don't know," said Chryssa, who was braiding three blades of grass with great intentness. "Everybody don't grow up pretty. Oh, I know what I'll do, I'll make a leaf carpet." And away she ran to the bladder-senna tree.

It had large smooth leaves, and with a quantity of these in her frock and a tumbler of water by her side, Chryssa was soon seated on the front steps making a carpet: for by wetting the leaves she could make them stick together quite securely.

Then came tea, when all the cakes small and great made their appearance; and after tea the company went away.

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CHAPTER VIII.

CHICKENS AND EGGS.

'AUNT ESTHER," said Sybil, one day after dinner, "may we go down to the garden and look for strawberries?"

"The strawberries are all gone, child, long ago."

"Oh no, ma'am; I don't mean the Lafayettes, nor the—the—what *do* you call them?—the Chilis; but the little Alpine strawberries that grow by Chryssa's garden. You know they bear all summer."

"Oh yes!" said Chryssa jumping down from her chair, "and then I can see if any of my damask roses are out. May we, Aunt Esther?"

"If you won't stay too long. The sun is very hot."

"We won't stay too long," replied the young ones as they ran off.

The garden lay to the north of the house; and on either side the gate as you entered were the two little plots of ground which the children called their own. They were not very full of flowers as yet, though from time to time Mr. Rutherford brought home some roots or plants that he had found in the market, and placed them here. The last arrival of this kind had been a bunch of golden buttons for Chryssa and a fine tuberose for Sybil, and these were flourishing nicely. But Chryssa's chief delight was her damask rose-bush, while Sybil took no small pride in a little double-flowering almond. Early in the season this had been covered with delicate blossoms, as if a light fall of pink snow had rested there; and Chryssa's patience was sorely tried, for her rose-tree at the same time presented nothing but green leaves.

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"I don't believe my rose-bush can have such pretty flowers," she said, "if it ever has any at all!"

But as the days passed on, the almond flowers faded, while on the other side of the walk some little rosebuds made their appearance; at first green like the leaves, then by degrees striped with dark red, as if it were the dress of a little fairy who was trying very hard to get out; for there was every day more and more red and less and less green. To-day there was a rose open—not to its full extent, but in a beautiful half-blown state of sweetness.

"Oh, it's lovely!" Chryssa exclaimed in ecstasy. "Did you ever see anything so beautiful?" and then carefully taking hold of the stem she bent it down until nose as well as eyes could have the benefit of it.

"Oh me, how sweet!"

"I don't believe it's half so sweet as this," said Sybil, who had betaken herself to the Alpine bed, and was now holding one up one of the berries.

"Are there any strawberries?" said Chryssa, suddenly letting go the damask rose, which flew back with such energy that the bunch of bee-larkspur thought itself called upon, and returned the visit the next time the wind set that way.

"Are there any strawberries?" repeated Chryssa, when she had watched how the two neighbours knocked their heads together.

"Any? I think there are! Just look at all these red ones," said Sybil, turning up the leaves, "and there are some white ones."

The strawberries were very tempting and sweet, and of such a nice size, as the children remarked—"all ready cut up into mouthfuls." It was very pleasant too this eating first a red and then a white one, and all the talk about which was best. Then suddenly Sybil jumped up and uttered a loud scream.

"Why, Syb, what in the world's the matter?" exclaimed Chryssa, when she had echoed the scream. "Did you see a snake?"

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"No indeed I didn't, but just when I was picking a large white strawberry, a great ugly toad jumped out of the leaves close by my hand; and it did startle me so! I wonder if he thought I had no business to eat strawberries. Ugh! it makes a cold chill run all over me."

"I wish a cold chill would run all over me," said Chryssa, "for I'm very hot. But toads don't poison anybody."

"I don't care," said Sybil, "they're very ugly and disagreeable. Come, let's go in. I don't want strawberries if I can't have them without toads."

"How you did scream!" said Chryssa laughing.

"Well, so did you."

"Oh well, because I didn't know what was the matter."

"That was particularly wise, to scream for you didn't know what."

"Ah, but I screamed because you did, you know. I thought there must be something the matter. I shouldn't scream for the toad; I am sure, I don't care that for him," said she, snapping her fingers.

"I do wonder what's the use of toads," said Sybil, "or if they're only made to frighten people."

"I think not," said Chryssa, "they don't frighten me at any rate; but I'll ask Uncle Ruth what they're good for; if I don't forget."

When the beauty of roses and the ugliness of toads had been much talked about to Mrs. Rutherford, Chryssa held up the bunch of berries she had brought, and said, "Now, Aunt Esther, you shall have these strawberries upon one condition."

"Not a hard one, I trust," said her aunt smiling, "for certainly your berries look very tempting."

"Don't they!" said Chryssa. "And just smell them; now doesn't your nose confirm the report of your eyes, as Sybil said to Uncle Ruth the other day?"

"Perfectly!" said Mrs. Rutherford. "And now for conditions."

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"Now for conditions! I want very much to know why you call these Alpine strawberries, and where they grow, and why the toads hide among them; and why my roses are damask roses—I thought you said damask was some kind of stuff like the cover of that big chair."

"For one condition you 'd better say four," remarked Sybil.

"No, the condition is that I answer all these difficult questions," said Mrs. Rutherford. "Well, Chryssie, the strawberries are called Alpine because it is said they grow wild on the Alps."

"The Alps!" repeated Chryssa, "those are the very high, big mountains in Switzerland, that always have snow on them. I had them once for my geography question. But what makes you say, 'It is said'?"

"Because I have never been on the Alps myself, and therefore know about them only from other people and books."

"I don't believe they do grow there, then," said Chryssa. "How can strawberries live in the snow?"

"They can live where the snow melts off in the summer; and it is only the tops of the mountains that are white all the year round."

"I wish I could see them," said Chryssa; "it must be very funny to see strawberries and snow on the same mountain. "Oh, Sybil, we haven't looked for eggs to-day."

"I can't go now," said Sybil, "I must read my Rollin."

"Yes, I thought you wanted to read Rollin very much, by the way you 've been looking up and listening to me."

"Suppose you give her nothing more to listen to, then," said Mrs Rutherford. "What if you were to try how much you can get interested in the boundaries of Alabama?"

"Oh, Aunt Esther!" said Chryssa, laughing. "I know what you mean. Well, where's the atlas? But I don't

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think I shall get interested at all, because you see it isn't interesting. But I fancy I know them already. It's bounded on the north by——"

"Don't study aloud," said Mrs. Rutherford; "you will disturb Sybil."

"But you have not told me about the toads, nor the damask roses," said Chryssa, suddenly coming back from the boundaries of Alabama.

"We'll talk of them another time. I must be busy now, and so must you."

And Chryssa did try to be busy and quiet, but it was hard work, much harder than the boundary question. And though she sat on the floor with the atlas in her lap, she occasionally broke the silence by such ejaculations as "High diddle diddle!" or a line of "The little kits about the house," adding in an under tone, "I wish we *had* little kits, I'm sure."

"Miss Chryssa," said Janet, coming in while the western boundary was in demand, "Garret has found a hen with ten little chickens, and he says, wouldn't you like to come and put 'em in the coop, Miss?"

"Ten little chickens?" screamed Chryssa, springing to her feet and dropping the atlas, "Where are they? where did he get them? Oh yes, I should like it very much."

"Garret's below with the chickens in a basket, Miss."

Chryssa looked down at the atlas and then up at her aunt; but Mrs. Rutherford never raised her eyes.

"I'll come in two minutes, Janet," she said, drawing a long breath and sitting down on the floor again; "tell Garret to wait for me. I'll come just as soon as I can; I've only got to find the capital of Alabama."

In two minutes it was found and stowed away in Chryssa's head; the atlas was put back in the drawer, and running down the steps, Chryssa skipped along the walk to the locust grove, where she found the old hen in a coop.

"What a pretty old hen!" said Chryssa, looking in.

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"But what makes her scream and poke her head through the coop so?"

Garret, who had been sitting under the trees with the basket of chickens, now came and looked at the old hen just as if he hadn't been watching her for the last ten minutes, and said, "I suppose she wants her chickens, Miss."

"Oh, where are they?" said Chryssa. "I'll give them to her this minute."

But when she had cautiously lifted the cover of the basket and peeped in, the chickens seemed quite too pretty to part with.

"Why can't I keep them in here, Garret? and then I could play with them so nicely. Do you think the old hen would care? I don't believe she loves them half as well as I do."

"She loves them very much, Miss," said Garret, shaking his head. "She just gave them all she could find to eat, and she flew at me like everything when I tried to catch 'em."

"But she might have some other chickens," said Chryssa, with a fresh peep into the basket. "I dare say we could find some ugly ones that would do very well for her."

"She wouldn't have them, Miss," said Garret; "most hens will kill any strange chickens that come near them."

"Well, you shall have these, old hen," said Chryssa. "Oh, what dear little soft things! and so fat. They're a good deal prettier than if they had feathers. Let's see, I'll put down this brown one first—no, the black one; I like that least. There's only one black, and one brown, and two gray, like the old hen; and how many—one, two—don't run about so, I can't count you, chickies—one, two, three, four, five, six white ones. There, now I hope you are satisfied, old hen."

The old hen did seem to be satisfied, for after a few turns up and down the coop, and a great deal of scratching and clucking, she established herself in one corner

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and spread out her wings to accommodate the chickens. They, crowding and struggling to get under her—now pushing one another out, and now in—at length made their mother cover a larger space than Chryssa would have thought possible. She stood in rapt attention. Suddenly the hen got up and walked to the other corner, with the sleepy chickens trooping after her; but when she had scratched about for a little there, she returned and established herself once more in her old place. Soon, all the chicks were disposed of but one little gray one, which could by no means get under cover; but wisely resolving that his feet should be warm if his head was not, he jumped upon the hen's back; and to Chryssa's great delight, a white chicken, who was perhaps in rather strait quarters, thrust his head out through the feathers of the old hen's wing.

"I never saw such black eyes as he has!" thought Chryssa, while her own grew very bright and big. And then they were all quiet, except an occasional sleepy chirp of remonstrance against the encroachments of a brother chick, or a soft murmuring "Peep!" of pleasure. Even the old hen shut her eyes and seemed to doze, opening them now and then, however, to make sure that Chryssa wasn't going to shoot her.

How long Chryssa stood there with folded hands, gazing into the coop, is uncertain. Garret had long since gone to his work, and the sun was climbing higher and higher into the tree-tops, and the chickens had dreamed a perfect variety of things; yet she stood there, one foot standing quietly by the side of the other foot, and the wind blowing her little white apron to and fro; the empty basket by her side; and those two little clasped hands never stirred from each other. A chipping-bird, as he flew home to his nest, very nearly lighted upon her for a little post, she stood so still.

And how long she would have remained there is also very doubtful, if Sybil and the egg-basket had not come running down the road.

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"Oh, there you are, Chryssie," said Sybil, "and the chickens, too, I suppose. Are they pretty?"

"Oh, they're beautiful!" said Chryssa, without stirring her position.

It was agreed, however, that Sybil should see the brood another time, "It would be such a pity to wake them up;" and when Chryssa had eagerly told all she had seen and heard, they proceeded to the barn.

"Where's Garret, I wonder?" said Sybil; "you know we want him to open the barn door and go up the ladder for us."

Garret appeared at her call, and opened the door and looked in the hay loft, but could find no eggs; then he returned to his work.

"It's odd there are none up there," said Sybil; "there *ought* to be some; and there are only two in the nest on the floor. I'll tell you what, Chryssa, it looks as if there might be a nest up in that corner, in the hay behind that old blue door that looks as if it had been thrown there on purpose. Do you see?"

"Yes, I see," said Chryssa, standing on tiptoe; "at least I see the door. But you can't climb up there; shall I call Garret?"

"No, no; I want to go myself. I tell you I can climb better than he can, this minute. Stop, I'll take out these eggs for fear I should break them. Now, you stand still; don't step on the pitchfork or tumble out of the door."

Chryssa laughed and stood still, and her sister scrambled up on the heap of hay.

"Oh Chryssa!" she exclaimed, as she put her head behind the blue door, "here's a nest, and ever so many eggs in it!"

"How many?" said Chryssa, wishing very much that she was big enough to climb heaps of hay.

"I don't know yet. There's eight, I believe; but you know I must leave one for a nest-egg, so there are only seven for us."

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"Well, that's a good many," said Chryssa, folding her hands in a new position, and looking very much pleased.

"Yes, indeed; and they're such big ones, too. There must be more than one hen that has a nest up here, for some of the eggs are brown and some are white."

"I suppose they think it's a nice place," said Chryssa. "But now, Syb, take care of yourself coming down—the hay is slippery. Now, let me see; oh, what beauties! how nice and white they look, all but that one, and that's as brown as Aunt Esther said my neck would be—as brown as an Indian. I thought you said *some* of them were brown—there's only one."

"Well, one's some," said Sybil.

"Is it?" said Chryssa. "Well, mayn't I look in that other new nest that we made in the cowhouse yesterday? You took all the eggs out of this one."

"I don't believe there's anything there," said Sybil, as they crossed the barn-yard, "but you may look. Hens don't always like the nests other people make for them,"

"So hens are people, are they?" said Chryssa. "Now we'll see. Oh, let me open the door: I can. Oh yes, here are two new eggs in the nest! I dare say Speckle laid 'em—she's such a nice little hen. I wish I could take 'em both."

"Well, take them, then," said Sybil, "and I'll put in this nest-egg out of the manger; the hens don't lay there any more. Now let's make haste, Chryssa, it's time for Uncle Ruth to be home, and you know he will bring the fan to night, so I want to meet him first."

"What sort of a fan will he get?" said Chryssa.

"I don't know; but I asked him not to get one with either a pink or a green ribbon, so that it needn't be like ours."

"Why I should like it to have a ribbon like mine," said Chryssa; "you are so funny; you never want anything if anybody has got something like it."

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"There's the gig coming along the lane," said Sybil; "take this basket, Chryssa; I must run."

"But Sybil!" called out little Chryssa, into whose hand the basket was thrust, "I want to run, too; and I can't, with the basket."

Pat, pat, went Sybil's feet along the walk, and presently Chryssa began to run too, then she heard the eggs go rattle, rattle, in the basket, in a very breakable sort of way. She stopped and looked in; they were not broken yet, but they might be. Then she set the basket down under a locust tree; no, that would'nt do; somebody might knock it over, or steal it. She took up the basket again, her heart swelling and her lips trembling with the disappointment, and walked on towards the house as fast as she could; but with very faint hopes of getting there in time to see the fan presented, much less unrolled. Suddenly Sybil came flying down the walk towards her again, and catching the basket in one hand and Chryssa's hand in the other, she began to run for the house; but carrying the basket so steadily that the eggs did not say a word. Neither did Chryssa, for she was too much out of breath; and after all they got to the gate as soon as the gig did, and Mr. Rutherford jumped out and walked with them.

"Uncle Ruth," said Sybil, after the first greeting, "have you got the fan?"

"What does that look like?" said he, with a smile, and handing her a flat and very fan-like little parcel.

"Oh, that must be it," said Chryssa; and as Mr. Rutherford passed into the house, the children stood still on the gravel walk and opened the paper. There was the fan, of dark gray feathers, and with a purple ribbon fastened to the handle. It gave great satisfaction.

"Its prettier than either of ours," said Chryssa, "and the ribbon's longer. I'm very glad! But oh, Sybil, how good you were to come back for me; because I never should have got here if you hadn't."

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"No I wasn't good," said Sybil; "and I didn't go back because I wanted to help you; so you needn't thank me for it. If I had been good I shouldn't have left you in the first place."

"I think you were very good," said Chryssa contentedly. So they went in and gave Mrs. Rutherford her birthday present, and she was quite as much surprised and pleased as they had expected.

"Uncle Ruth," said Chryssa when she had taken hold of his hand, and was walking up and down the drawing-room with him after tea; "did you get the ribbon because you liked the fan, or the fan because you liked the ribbon?"

"I think the ribbon had the most to do with my choice. I had picked out a fan with a pink ribbon, but then I remembered Sybil's prohibition,"

"Oh, I wish you could have got that," said Chryssa, "and then it would have been like mine Is this fan as pretty as that one?"

"Quite as pretty."

"What nice things ribbons are," said Chryssa, after a pause.

"Do you know what they are made of?"

"Why, no, Uncle Ruth, they look a little like Aunt Esther's silk frocks, only they're softer."

"They are made of silk threads, as those frocks are; and the silk threads are made by a worm."

"A worm, Uncle Ruth? Garret showed me some worms the other day when he was digging, but they didn't look as if they could make silk or anything else. They were very ugly indeed."

"Those were earth-worms; the silk-worms are short and thick, and of a whitish colour."

"And can they make ribbons?" said Chryssa wonderingly.

"They make the silk threads from which ribbons and all other silk things are woven. Some day I will take

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you to Mr. Grandin's, and show you his silk-worms, and then you will understand more about it."

"Oh, thank you, Uncle Ruth!" and so it was settled.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SILK-WORMS AND THE BUTTERFLY DOOR

"SYBIL!" cried Chryssa, the minute she opened her eyes next morning, "did we find any eggs in that nest yesterday?"

"What nest?" said Sybil, very sleepily.

"Why that new nest we made in the cow-house,—don't you know?"

"Why yes, child, of course we did. How can you forget so!"

"I didn't forget, but I thought that perhaps I'd dreamt it."

"Well you didn't dream it—at least I don't know but you dreamt it, but it's true; so I hope you are satisfied."

"We found two eggs, didn't we? I was thinking of two nice white eggs."

"And if you'd been thinking of twenty you needn't have waked me up. Do go and leave me in peace and quiet."

"Ah, but you oughtn't to be quiet," said Chryssa. "You'd better not go to sleep again, I can tell you, or you'll be as late as you were yesterday. Come!—get up!"

"Won't you go and feed your chickens, Chryssa?"

"Oh my chickens!—poor little things—I dare say they're hungry. But I'm not ready yet, you see, so they must wait."

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And then came an eager and determined splashing in the basin, which would have told any person with one ear open that Chryssa was washing herself; but both Sybil's ears were more than half shut, therefore she took up a different idea.

"It doesn't rain, does it?" she inquired a little more sleepily than before.

"Why no!" said Chryssa laughing merrily as she rubbed her face with the towel. "If you'd only open your eyes you'd see that it doesn't. I wonder they don't get open in spite of you—the sun's right on them. There!—I do believe I heard one of the chickens cry this minute. Sybil, how long do you suppose it will be before they get feathers?"

"How many feathers?" said Sybil, who between Chryssa and the sun was waking up "in spite of herself." "They'll have some in a week, I dare say."

"Well I mean a great many feathers—wings and tail and all, just as the old hen has. How long will it be before they'll be as big as the old hen?"

"Oh I don't know"—said Sybil turning over. "How can I tell? By the time the old hen's superannuated, I should think."

Chryssa stood with an intensely grave face, trying to imagine what superannuated could mean; but Sybil's now resolutely closed eyes gave no encouragement to further questions, and catching up her sun-bonnet she ran down to the kitchen. At least she was running down, when Mrs. Rutherford called her.

"Where are you going, Chryssa?"

"To get some Indian-meal, Aunt Esther, to feed my chickens."

"It's too wet for you now, dear; stay here till after breakfast."

"But, Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, appearing at the parlour door, "my chickens must be very hungry."

"I don't believe they're awake yet," said Mrs. Rutherford. "What do you suppose would become of such

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little chickens if the old hen should let them go out in the wet grass so early in the morning? No, no, you may be sure she takes as good care of her chickens as I do of mine;. and see, here comes breakfast."

"I don't think I'm a chicken at all," said Chryssa laughing. "Then you don't really think they're awake?"

"I don't suppose a single one of them has got his eyes open. But where's Sybil? isn't she up?"

"She hasn't got her eyes open, either, I believe," said Chryssa; and jumping upstairs she not only awoke her sister with the news that the coffee-pot was on the table, but also slightly aroused her sister's displeasure by sundry comparisons drawn from the supposed fact that the chickens were yet slumbering. Whence Chryssa came to the wise conclusion that it is best not to say much to people until they are broad awake.

"I shall come home early this afternoon," said Mr. Rutherford as they sat at breakfast, "and we will drive out to Grandin's. I promised Chryssa to show her his silk worms."

"What does he keep them for, Uncle Ruth?"

"More for amusement than anything else, I believe."

"Oh, let us have some too," said Chryssa; "it would be so nice to have the silk threads and make ribbon."

Mr. Rutherford smiled.

"It takes more than silk threads to make ribbons," he said; "and perhaps when you have seen the worms you will care less about having them. I think your chickens are much prettier pets."

Thus reminded of her new charge, Chryssa got a saucer and spoon and went off to the meal-tub; and when she had carefully mixed as much as chickens with full-grown appetites could require, she ran down to the locust grove, and soon found to her disappointment that the old hen was able to eat much more than all the chickens put together. However, they chirped over

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Chryssa, Sybil, and Miss Grandin visiting the rabbit-hutch, p. 63.

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their tiny breakfast with a satisfied air that was very pleasant as far as it went, and Chryssa comforted herself with the hope that they would have larger appetites in time.

The afternoon was very clear and pleasant. Mr. Rutherford came home early as he had promised, and they set out in high spirits for Mr. Grandin's, such high spirits indeed, that Chryssa not taking good care of her little parasol, a jolt of the carriage flung it into the road, and in a moment the wheel had passed over it. Well, it couldn't be helped; but she thought that did not mend the matter much, and her complacency was not fairly restored till she caught sight of the rustic summer-houses, and smelled or fancied she smelled the flowers in Mr. Grandin's garden.

They were very cordially received, and the garden was very beautiful. Flowers—flowers—everywhere, and curious trees and shrubs, and little white rabbits hiding their red eyes behind prison bars, where Chryssa pitied them very much. And as they walked about, Miss Grandin picked all sorts of beautiful and sweet flowers for them, till all Chryssa's fingers were too few to hold her share.

Then they went into the house to see the silk-worms.

Chryssa did not like them near so well as she expected. They were large whitish-coloured things, with too many feet for beauty, Chryssa thought, walking about and eating leaves, and looking very comfortable and very ugly. What could they have to do with pink ribbons? And just as she was thinking how well it was they were shut up, Miss Grandin opened a little door in the frame, and taking out a particularly large worm, laid it lovingly against her cheek. Chryssa turned away in great disgust and looked at a cage of white mice, which seemed quite beautiful by comparison; though in themselves she thought them very ugly and ill-used.

"Why, Chryssa!" said Mr. Rutherford, when he came

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in from the garden, "I thought you wanted to see the silk-worms?"

"I have been looking at them, Uncle Ruth, but I didn't want to get them on me."

Miss Grandin laughed, and put the worm back and shut the door; and then very unwillingly Chryssa came up to the frame again. But Mr. Rutherford wanted her to hear all they were talking and telling about the worms, how that in the first thirty days after one is hatched it eats sixty thousand times its own weight of leaves, and increases forty times in length and nine thousand fine hundred times in weight. How it takes twelve pounds of cocoons to make one pound of reeled silk; and this one pound makes fourteen yards of excellent Gros de Naples.

"What is reeled silk?" said Sybil.

"The cocoons are thrown into boiling water to destroy the moth, and then they are stirred about with a bunch of twigs till the twigs catch the ends of the silk threads, then the threads are wound off upon a reel."

The cocoons were very pretty, Chryssa thought; but she entirely disapproved of the boiling water.

"Why must they kill the moth, Uncle Ruth?" she asked.

"Because it would eat its way out through the cocoon, and so injure the silk."

"How many threads would the moth cut?" said Chryssa, with an endeavour to get at the probable loss of letting it live.

"Properly speaking there is but one thread on each cocoon, but as it is wound round and round, the moth in eating its way out would cut this thread many times."

The balance between loss of life and of silk was easy to strike in Chryssa's mind. Why couldn't they piece the silk?

"But that stuff looks so rough," said Sybil, "not a bit like threads of silk."

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"That is only the outer covering; the fine silk thread is underneath."

"I shouldn't think there would be much room for it," said Sybil. "A very short thread would make that little cocoon."

"The cocoon is small, I grant you," said Mr. Rutherford, "but so is the silk very fine; and the thread which makes that little cocoon is about three hundred yards long, spun double. It is very light too, and ten thousand cocoons do not generally yield five pounds of silk."

And here Mrs. Grandin (thinking perhaps that Chryssa must be tired and bewildered with the long threads of silk), opened a closet door, the inner surface of which was entirely covered with butterflies, and beetles, and dragon flies, and ichneumon flies, and chafers, of every size and colour, and mixture of colour. What could make them stay here? Chryssa wondered, but she did not like to ask. So she stood still and looked at the butterflies, and they stood still too, there did not a wing flutter. They were not even tempted by Chryssa's bunch of flowers, though she looked down to see if none of them had transferred themselves.

Then Mrs. Grandin pointed to a large purple emperor on the door, and began a long story of how she had been walking in the garden to look at a new Amaryllis; how the butterfly had alighted on her shawl; how the gardener had cried out and she had chid him; and then how she had skilfully covered her prize with a bell-glass. Chryssa felt more and more puzzled. Would Mrs. Grandin really catch a live butterfly and stick him up there? and how could she? and were all the occupants of the door dead or alive at that present moment? She couldn't tell, but somehow the door didn't look so pretty to her now; and she was just turning away to the white mice again, when Mrs. Rutherford took leave, and they came away. No sooner were they all in the carriage than Chryssa began:—

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"Uncle Ruth, what *did* make those butterflies stay on that door?"

"They were fastened there."

"Fastened there?"

"Yes; if you had looked a little closer you would have seen a small pin thrust through each."

"But I don't understand," said Chryssa knitting her brows with excess of perplexity; "I thought she said that big butterfly got on her shawl in the garden?"

"So she did; and it was there she caught him."

"But if he could fly about he wasn't dead."

"Certainly not; I believe none of the butterflies were dead till they were pinned up to the door. People seldom find dead butterflies in such good preservation."

"Mrs. Grandin must be a nice woman!" said Sybil coolly.

"Some people are very fond of collecting insects," said Mr. Rutherford with a slight smile at Chryssa's speechless face; "and as they would not stay in the house alive, these people take various ways of killing them. Sometimes they are killed instantly by being pierced with a pin dipped in a very strong and poisonous liquid, —sometimes they are merely fastened up to a door and left to die at their leisure. This I believe was the fate of those you saw to-day."

"But it's *dreadfully* cruel! don't you think so, Uncle Ruth?"

"Dreadfully cruel indeed; but unfortunately there are plenty of people in the world who are willing to do cruel things for their own amusement."

"I don't want ever to go there again," said Chryssa, who really looked pale at the idea of such an unscrupulous slaughter of butterflies.

"Not even to get such flowers?" said Mr. Rutherford. "Look at those roses and geraniums in your hand, Chryssie."

"Yes, Uncle Ruth—they're very sweet, but I don't like people that do so."

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"I don't like the things they do," said her uncle, "but you must not judge the people too harshly. All are not equally tender-hearted by nature, nor by education. I do not suppose Mrs. Grandin had the least idea that there was anything wrong or cruel in what we dislike so much."

"I don't see why she should take the trouble to be cruel for butterflies," said Sybil. "I'm sure I wouldn't."

"Oh I would!" said Chryssa. "If it *wasn't* cruel I'd get some too. They're such beautiful things!"

She sat for some time with her head a little on one side, her hands with the beautiful bunch of flowers hanging listlessly down in her lap, and her eyes fixed on the road; but not apparently thinking of it or its shadows, to which the setting sun gave more and more length and distinctness every moment.

"Chryssa!" said Mrs. Rutherford, "are you asleep?"

"Oh no, Aunt Esther, I was thinking—don't butterflies ever die? I mean unless somebody kills them?"

"Yes, indeed; they are by no means immortal, nor even very long lived."

"Then if I found any dead ones I might keep them, mightn't I?"

"To be sure. I don't think you would ever get so very fond of them as to catch live ones too."

"But what will you do with them, Chryssie?" said Mr. Rutherford. "I doubt whether Aunt Esther would care to have her closet doors ornamented in such a manner."

"Oh I wouldn't put them on the doors, Uncle Ruth," said Chryssa smiling. "I'll put them in a box—if I get any."

"You haven't got a box," said Sybil.

"Yes I have, I've got a little tin box that had soda powders in it—no, that's too small."

"Well, when that is full you shall have another," said Mrs. Rutherford.

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"But Aunt Esther, I'm afraid that's too small for *anything*."

"Don't you think it would hold a beetle,—or a lady-bug?"

"Oh yes," said Chryssa, laughing, "but I wasn't thinking of beetles; I was thinking of that big purple butterfly."

"I fear you will not find such a one very soon, dear Chryssie; they live in the tops of the high trees, and seldom come down within reach of people's fingers."

"But if one died he might have to come down," said Chryssa.

"Well dear," said her aunt smiling, "if one does, you shall have a box for it."

"You'll never want to sing 'I'd be a butterfly' again, Chryssa," said Sybil.

"Oh yes I shall," said Chryssa, "because you know if I was a butterfly I would never let Mrs. Grandin catch me!" And she began to sing—

"Oh I'd be a butterfly—flitting about
From roses to lilies, now in and now out.
I'd flutter all day in the sun's pleasant ray,
And with butterfly brothers I'd merrily play.

"And I'd be a honey-bee—busy and bright
From sunrise at morning till dew-fall at night.
Sweet honey I'd store, till the season was o'er,
And the comb and the hive were too full to hold more.

"Oh, I'd be the violet, modest and sweet!
And almost unseen in my shady retreat;
Yet there can be no doubt I should soon be found out,
For my perfume would spread itself all round about.

"And I'd be the lily that lives in the vale,
With tall leaves to shelter my flowers so pale.
I'd hang my head there with my sisters so fair,
And our breath should be borne on the soft summer air.

"But now, sir, you must not believe that we would
Be a butterfly, flower, or bee if we could.
Oh no! we agree that we rather had be
Just such little children as those you now see."

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"Yes," said Mr. Rutherford, "and just such little children as those wishes would make you. As light-hearted as the butterflies, as busy as bees—and seeking honey from the best flowers—as modest and humble as the violet. And how can you be like the lily?"

The children did not speak, and then Mrs. Rutherford looked up and said softly, "that you keep yourselves unspotted from the world."

CHAPTER X.

CATS AND CRACKERS.

THE children were eating a lunch of bread and milk. Seated by a little table behind the parlour door, they took alternate spoonfuls out of the same bowl.

"Do you like the crust or the soft best?" said Sybil.

"I like the crust best."

"So do I. It's a pity we both like it best."

"Well," said Chryssa, "you take a mouthful of crust, and then I'll take a mouthful of crust. That'll be fair."

So they eat away at "the soft," and then Sybil would say, "Now let's us take some crust;" and a few bits of crust were taken accordingly.

"Why did we have lunch to-day?" said Chryssa.

"Because Uncle Ruth's coming home to dinner, so it'll be late," said Sybil. "And Aunt Esther says we may go and see Betsy Donovan."

"Oh, that'll be very nice," said Chryssa. "I like to go there, don't you?"

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"Yes, pretty well," said Sybil. "Now, Chryssa, you took crust twice running."

"Did I?" said Chryssa; "well, I didn't mean to do so. I was thinking about Betsy Donovan, so I suppose I took it accidentally."

"Never mind, I don't care," said Sybil. "You may take two pieces more if you've a mind. But, Chryssa, if Betsy offers us any candy to-day, do not let us take it."

"Why?" said Chryssa; "I like that candy very much. Betsy gave me some twice, and I eat it all up. It tasted just like cloves. I never saw such candy anywhere else: why shouldn't we take it?"

"Because," said Sybil, "Betsy keeps it to sell, and it doesn't seem right for us to eat it. I know it's very good, but she might get a penny for every stick she gives us; and she is poor."

"Well, if that's all," said Chryssa, "I'll give her a penny for it too. I would have asked Aunt Esther for one before if you'd told me."

"But Betsy wouldn't let us pay for it," said Sybil—"I'm sure she wouldn't. She's always very glad to give it to us, but then I don't think we ought to take it."

"Well, I won't, then," said Chryssa, "but it's a great pity."

The children got ready, and set out with Janet to walk to Betsy Donovan's little house. It was quite a long walk from Mr. Rutherford's, but on a pretty winding road, so shady with trees and sweet with flowers, that most people would have called it too short.

The house was very small, and as brown as summer suns and winter storms could make it; for paint it had none, except upon the roof and the front door, and they were both red. The front window displayed a variety of temptations to the passer-by to stop and spend his money, if he had any; and if he had not, to stand outside and wish that he had. And as Betsy's house stood by the sea-shore, and a great many fisher-boys went that way,

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the grass under the window was almost as well trodden and worn as the boards of her little floor. For in the window stood candies upon every little ledge, leaning some one way and some the other; while spools of cotton, penny trumpets, whistles, cigars, and scalloped gingerbread, were arranged in what is commonly called "tempting confusion" upon the window and the window-sill.

There was only a little strip of grass by the house, and then there came shore weeds, and the mere shore itself, stretching down in sandy barrenness to where the wet feet of the little waves came frolicking over the pebbles. Odd-looking sea-birds, with long necks and legs, stalked about over the sand, on which an old fish-boat or two lay drawn up high and dry, out of reach of the tide. Everything was very still this afternoon, and even a windmill that stood off in the distance was as motionless as if it had no arms, or didn't know how to use them. Andrew Donovan was down on the shore mending his fishing net, and Betsy sat sewing on the step of the door.

Of course she was very glad to see the children, and provided them at once with the very best and smallest chairs that she had. And the next thing was to take down two sticks of that very yellow-striped candy from the window, and give one to Sybil and one to Chryssa. And they could no more have helped eating it than they could have helped wishing for it—Betsy put it into their hands and would hear no word of refusal. She would also have made them eat some of the scalloped gingerbread, but it was most resolutely declined. As neither of the children was partial to gingerbread, this was the easier done.

And so they sat there for a while with great satisfaction—Janet and Betsy talking, and Sybil and Chryssa perched up on their chairs eating the yellow-striped candy.

Then came two little ragged boys for something out

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of the window—a scalloped gingerbread—which they immediately divided, and two bunches of queer little red rolls of something. Chryssa watched these commodities delivered and the pennies received, with great interest.

"What sort of candy was that, Betsy?" she inquired, as Mrs. Donovan came back to her seat.

"It wasn't candy at all, love—it was just fire-crackers."

"Fire-crackers!" said Chryssa, "what's fire-crackers? Oh, Sybil! what's that?"

A queer little pop outside the door called forth this last exclamation; and then there was another pop, and another, and then a whole succession of them, coming so fast that Chryssa was almost too frightened to ask questions.

"What is it? it's very disagreeable—I'm afraid of it."

"It's only the fire-crackers," said Betsy. "They won't hurt you—they don't hurt anybody."

"But I don't like them at all," said Chryssa, drawing close to her sister, who sat up quite straight and courageously, though not liking the crackers herself. "I wish they'd stop—what makes those boys do so?"

"They are for the fourth of July," said Betsy; "they bought them on purpose to fire them off."

"But it isn't the fourth now," said Sybil.

"No, Miss, but the boys isn't particular about the time, so they have the crackers."

"But what shall we do?" said Chryssa, "we can't get home—why must they do that for the fourth of July—I wish they wouldn't."

"They've gone off a bit now," said Janet looking out between the sticks of candy and scalloped gingerbread. "I think we can get away before they come back again."

And saying good-by in great haste to Betsy, the two children ran off from the house so fast, that Janet could

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not come up with them until they stopped at what they thought a safe distance.

"Let's gather some flowers to take home," said Sybil, when they were in the wood road again. "See, here are wild roses."

"And here are buttercups, and some great big white flowers."

"No, they're only great big bunches of white flowers," said Sybil.

"Oh!" said Janet, "don't pick that, Miss Chryssa. Elder's nothing but a weed—the farmers' boys all cut them down. And with all the pinks and poppies you've got at home too."

"I don't care," said Chryssa; "I like these very much, they're so sweet. And the pinks we've got now aren't sweet a bit, and the poppies never are. I think poppies would be too pretty if they were sweet. This isn't sweet either, but it's pretty."

A green vine, with bunches of purple flowers and green and red berries, was twining in and out the fence, and clambering over a branch of the elder.

"Don't pick that," said Sybil, "it's poison. Maria Delue says it's nightshade."

"Here are nice flowers," said Chryssa, running up to a tall blackberry bush that had put forth its white stars somewhat late in the season.

"Yes, and nice thorns, too," said Sybil. "You'd better come away. Don't you remember the fox that tried to get through the bramble hedge?"

"I wish I had all those stories," said Chryssa, quitting the blackberry. "I like them so much—all about the foxes, and the cocks, and the iron pots."

"Well, I'll tell you something," said Sybil. "I knew you wanted that book, and so I asked Uncle Ruth to get it for you."

"Oh how good you are!" said Chryssa. "Do you think he'll get it to-day?"

"I can't tell—maybe, and maybe not. Some days

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he's too busy to think of anything. Come, let's sit down here and rest, and I'll tell you a story."

"Oh do!" said Chryssa, running to seat herself on a stone, "that will be so nice."

"Well then, once upon a time——"

"But what makes you always say 'Once upon a time there was'?" said Chryssa. "Why don't you say 'There is'?"

"Oh because I don't want you to suppose it's a true story," said Sybil. "'There is,' means something true, you know, and 'once upon a time' stories may be true or not. But there is a great deal of truth in this one, only it's not all true. There was once a little worm crawling about on an oak leaf. And there were half a dozen other little worms that were his brothers and sisters. And they used to go up and down the leaf, and when they had eaten the most of it up they went to another. Then every night they all slept in a great soft web where the dew could not get at them.

"One day somebody told this first little worm——"

"Who told him?" said Chryssa.

"Oh I don't know," said Sybil. "Somebody told him that he must spin a little house for himself, and shut himself up, and stay there for ever so long."

"Was he to die?" asked Chryssa.

"No, he shouldn't die, but he must stay there for a long time, and then he should come out again. But he never could be a little worm any more."

"What should he be then?" said Chryssa.

"Why he should be a butterfly, with golden wings and bright eyes; and he should fly about all the day long, and call at the flower houses and eat honey."

"Well, that was a great deal better," said Chryssa. "I don't like little worms—much."

"He didn't think so," said Sybil. "He thought he would rather be a worm, and he was very sorry to think he never should crawl about on oak leaves any more."

"And did he spin his house, and live there, and come out a butterfly?"

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"Yes," said Sybil, "he was obliged."

"Well," said Chryssa, "when he was a butterfly, did he find any of the other little worms that had turned into butterflies too?"

"I don't know," said Sybil. "Yes, I suppose so. Of course he did."

"Why, Sybil," said Chryssa, who had been thinking very gravely for two minutes, "you've made this all up from what Aunt Esther was talking about yesterday! I heard her say that people do not die when we say they die, any more than a worm dies when it turns into a chrysalis."

"I saw a worm and a butterfly both on a rose," said Sybil, "and it made me think of it. I was thinking how papa and mama are watching for us, and wondering that we don't long to come to heaven."

By this time they were rested and walked on. It so happened that Mr. Rutherford did remember Chryssa's book that very day, and the first thing he gave her, after a kiss, when she got home, was a nice little dark brown volume, full of pictures, and with "Æsop's Fables," in gilt letters on the back.

"I hardly know whether it is a very nice copy, dear," he said; "but I found it not easy to get one at all."

Chryssa's thanks were few, for upon opening the book, such a delightful mixture of "foxes, and cocks, and iron pots," caught her eye, that there was nothing for it but to sit down at once and begin to read.

But she was not half through the foxes before Mrs. Rutherford said it was too dark to read.

"Come down to the garden with me," she said, "and see how your flowers grow."

"In one minute, Aunt Esther," said Chryssa.

But by the time she had finished the last speech the bramble made to the fox, thinking to herself how funny it would have been if the blackberry had talked so to her, Mrs. Rutherford was half way down the green slope. Chryssa went hop, skip, and jump, to overtake her, and

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in her haste tumbled over, and was near demolishing a little toad, which, however, got off with no very serious injury.

"See the consequence of running so fast," said Mrs. Rutherford; "you have almost killed that poor little toad."

A word thoughtlessly spoken!

Poor Chryssa! the idea of running over or hurting anything was bad enough, but an implied possibility that it might have been avoided, made matters still worse. She bestowed several very tender looks upon the toad, and would have given him any assistance in her power; but whenever she even *thought* of taking him from the grass to the gravel walk, the toad hopped off in the most unthankful manner. So Chryssa at last followed her aunt, carefully enough this time, and wondering within herself if she was never to run fast any more, or if toads were to be always in the way—or, as it has been more poetically expressed, "if the world was not wide enough for her and the toads too!"

She looked at the flowers with a very sober face, and though she answered all Mrs. Rutherford's remarks about them, her thoughts were on the slope with the unfortunate and ungrateful little toad. Chryssa had really felt quite hurt by his turning the cold shoulder to her in such a manner.

From these sorrowful thoughts she was at last happily aroused by the sight of some one coming up from the gate; it was Mary, just returned from Canterbury.

It was plain that she had something wrapped up in her apron, and in a moment both children were running. Sybil dashed through the grass, but Chryssa, remembering the toads, went round by the gravel-walk; and by the time Mary had reached the willow-tree, both little breathless runners were there too. She set down her basket, and unrolling her apron, she showed two little kittens, fast asleep, and pretty and soft enough almost

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to justify the children's exclamations. Both were gray and white.

"But how shall we know which is which?" said Chryssa. "Oh, I'll tell you; this one has got two gray ears, and that one has got one white ear. Now you choose."

"Well, I'll take gray ears," said Sybil.

"Then I'll take white ear," said Chryssa. "I like it just as well. Now, kitty, don't scratch me. Poor kitty!" she exclaimed, in some doubt, as the kitten, clinging to Mary's apron with all its might, wrinkled up its nose and mewed most piteously. "What's the matter? I won't hurt you."

"'Twould n't hurt her if ye did, I guess," said Mary. "Here, I'll put 'em in yer aprons," said she, disengaging the kittens with what seemed no very gentle pull. "There, now take 'em off and put 'em to bed."

But where were they to sleep?

The children said up stairs, but Mrs. Rutherford said down, and down it was; though many were the fears that the kittens would take cold in a basket of hay on the kitchen hearth. And the next question was what they should be called, for to go to sleep to dream of unnamed kittens was impossible.

After much deliberation, Sybil, to whom the matter was referred, named her own, Bess, and the other, Cupid; and then, after one farewell pat, and a minute's silence to see "if they were purring," the two kittens who slept up stairs went thither.

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CHAPTER XI.

CLEAVELAND.

THERE were few people that came oftener to Rose Hill than Mrs. Salisbury; and she was the children's grandmother. Whenever her coach was seen coming along the lane, there was great calling and rejoicing from one to the other, and great desire to hear some of grandmama's stories over again; and, it must be confessed, some curiosity to know what was in grandmama's basket. There was also a great deal of interest connected with the crimped and puffed borders of her caps; and though Chryssa had been told about fifty times how they were done, she always forgot and asked again, or perhaps she liked to hear Mrs. Salisbury's description. If the old lady had a favourite of the two children, it was certainly Sybil; but this seemed to Chryssa quite proper and natural, for she was the oldest, and knew so much the most; and she never drew any other inference from the relative size of their workboxes or papers of candy. But she was very much surprised one day when Mrs. Salisbury said, "Chryssa, I want you to go back with me to Cleaveland."

"Want me?" she said, jumping up off the floor. "Is Aunt Esther going?"

"No, nobody is going but you. Grandpapa made me promise to bring him one of his pets, and Aunt Esther and Sybil will come to-morrow or next day. Will you go?"

"This morning?" said Chryssa, doubtfully. "No, grandmama, I don't think I can."

"Well, will you go this afternoon? Come," she added, seeing that Chryssa looked more dismayed than pleased, "don't you want to see grandpapa and Brutus?

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—and you shall have a little bed all to yourself in my room."

The little bed was a great temptation—it was moreover very flattering to be asked; and in spite of some undefined misgivings at her inmost heart, Chryssa consented to go in the afternoon, and having once consented, she would not draw back. It would be very foolish, she thought, and unkind, too, when she was so much wanted. For Chryssa was very particular about people's feelings. Many a time her aunt's arm thrown over her at night when they were sleeping together, was a heavier weight than her little body could bear quite pleasantly; but she would have been crushed rather than say she found such a token of Aunt Esther's love uncomfortable.

So Chryssa consented to go to Cleaveland; and immediately after an early dinner, the coach came to the door. Mrs. Salisbury had already gone down the steps, and Chryssa was following, when suddenly she turned round and ran up again.

"Oh, Aunt Esther," she said, drawing Mrs. Rutherford to one side of the hall, "will you please give me a verse for to-morrow?"

Her aunt looked down at her, and smoothed away the hair from that little upturned face.

"It must be a short one," said Chryssa, "because you know if I couldn't remember it, I mightn't know where to find it."

And stooping to kiss her once more, Mrs. Rutherford said:—

"'Our Father which art in heaven.'

Look up to Him, Chryssie, and rest upon Him, a great deal more than you do upon me. You are not going away from Him."

Before the scale of pleasure or pain had fairly descended (perceptibly at least) in Chryssa's mind, she was in the coach and outside the gate.

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There was no doubt about it then. Into the scale which held her going away from home, Chryssa threw all manner of thoughts and recollections, imaginations, too, till it went down, and down, and down. Before they reached the high road, Mrs. Salisbury chanced to look at her little companion, and saw that though she was perfectly quiet and silent, the tears were running down her cheeks as if their fountain were inexhaustible.

"My dear Chryssa!" she said, "what is the matter? Are you ill?"

Chryssa might have answered that she never cried for being ill, but she only shook her head.

"Don't you want to go with me? Do not cry, love, and I will tell Tim to turn, the minute we get to the road. I would not take you on any account, if you don't want to go."

No, Chryssa would not consent to turn back; she was steady in her resolve to go on; and by dint of rubbing her eyes very hard, at last made them understand what was expected of them; though whenever she tried to smile, tears would come first. But if her face could have been seen when no one was looking at it, Mrs. Salisbury would have given Tim the order to turn without more ado.

The drive was long. How long it seemed to Chryssa when her heart flew back—when she thought how happy they all were at home!—but it ended at last; though it was too dark for her to see much besides the old chimneys against the evening sky, and the white gate through which they passed and wheeled round to the front of the house.

"Oh, how sweet the honeysuckles are!" said Chryssa, sitting up straight on the broad, thick cushion of the coach, roused at last by the perfume which came wafted in through the window. And when Mr. Salisbury came out and lifted her from the carriage, and made the old mastiff carry her on his back across the piazza and into the hall, she felt quite cheered. And then, when she

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was in the old parlour, taking off her things and looking about, she brightened up yet more.

Tea was just getting ready; and not only was there the pleasant sound of cups and saucers and spoons, but a most agreeable smell of toast and smoked beef and above all of green tea, through the apartment.

Chryssa walked round the table, admiring the little silver peacocks on the cover of the sugar-bowl and the teapot-lid as she had often admired them before, and comparing the device on the spoon handles with that on their own spoons and forks at Rose Hill. On the whole she preferred the oakleaf to the shell, and had no doubt but R was a much prettier letter than S. And so for a while matters went on well enough.

But when all the old well-known objects had been examined, and tea was over, and the table cleared, Chryssa's face began to take up its former gravity; and after some vain efforts to amuse and brighten her up, Mrs. Salisbury proposed that she should go to bed.

They went upstairs, and there sure enough was the little bed, as nice and white as could be. Chryssa was really pleased, for she had never in her life slept by herself.

"Is this where Sybil slept?" she inquired.

"Yes," said Mrs. Salisbury, "this is the very same bed. And I shall be in this other bed, close by you, and will get you anything you want."

Chryssa thought if that were the case, she would have Aunt Esther and Sybil there directly; but she was in no mood to talk, and went to bed as fast as possible without stopping to say her prayers. Not that she forgot it; but Mrs. Salisbury did not ask her to kneel at her lap as Mrs. Rutherford would have done, and a new maid was there whom she had never seen, and altogether Chryssa felt strange and uncomfortable; and getting into her little bed, she hid her face and prayed there — not without a good many tears. She knew they had prayed for her that night at home, for her uncle never

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forgot to mention Sybil when she was away, and she felt quite sure he would not forget Chryssa; but here nobody had prayed for them, or seemed to think of praying at all. She wondered what could be the reason; and then she went to sleep and dreamed again the old dream about the bee and the locust flowers. Meantime her grandmother had gone down stairs, and the new maid sat by the window, looking out. But when Mrs. Salisbury came up again, and looked at the little sleeper in her white bed; the yet wet cheek and eyelashes made her think it would be some strong reason which should make her bring Chryssa alone to Cleaveland a second time.

Morning brought brighter prospects—when does morning not brighten all within as well as without? and when Chryssa awoke, her little heart turned a pirouette the very first thing, and she thought it was doubtful whether anybody could ever shed tears for anything. So she lay in her little bed with all manner of pleasantness. First it was highly probable that Aunt Esther would come to-day; or if not, Sybil might come, or her uncle; or at all events they would all come to-morrow. Then she had an indefinite number of things to do to-day, to get ready for them, and no less than three distinct topics of conversation already stored up, that were to be revealed to no one but Sybil. And over and through all, there was that undefined sense of gladness, which seems to ride into this world from heaven direct, upon the early sunbeams.

A little noise at her side made her turn her head; it was only Mrs. Salisbury snoring. Chryssa wondered very much how anybody could snore or sleep, such a fine morning; and getting out of bed very softly she began to dress herself. She was accustomed to do this, and always put her clothes in nice order on a chair at night, with her shoes and stockings under it on the floor, that she might know just where to find them. But when she was dressed, and had paid her respects to the

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old fashioned washstand in the corner, Chryssa began to feel lonely again, and to wish that somebody else would wake up. And then she remembered her verse; and she knelt down and prayed that her Father in heaven would always love her and make her his child.

Then she went and stood at the window, and watched the busy swallows that were fluttering and twitting about their nests under the eaves of the piazza.

"Chryssa!" Mrs. Salisbury called out from the bed, "come away, child—don't stand there, you'll tumble out."

"Oh no, grandmama," said Chryssa, but coming away at the same time, "I wasn't leaning out at all; and there's the roof of the piazza, too."

"No matter," said Mrs. Salisbury, "if you fell out, you might roll down. Go down-stairs, dear, and I'll come presently."

So Chryssa went one step at a time down the broad stairs, which gave no creaking acknowledgment of such little feet; stroked the great white cat that walked through the hall and away from her with the air of a person at home; and finally herself walked into the parlour.

How pleasant that old parlour was on a fine morning, it would be hard to tell any one who had never seen it. Two windows opened upon the piazza. Between them hung an old-fashioned mirror, its round frame set with so many knobs of gilding that you might have thought there were a dozen Chryssas in the room, from the number of little faces there represented.

Opposite this mirror were two doors—the one leading to the kitchen department, the other the entrance to a large closet. A pleasant place that closet was, with its brown stone cake jars, and glass pickle jars, and white earthen jars of peaches, and purple glasses of crab-apples. The hall door was on a third side of the room, and the fireplace and two more windows on the fourth. Several old family portraits, of Chryssa's great-great-grand-

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fathers and mothers, hung upon the walls; and a clock of very uncertain age ticked in the corner.

It was a favourite maxim with Mr. Salisbury that a fire was too pleasant a thing to be given up at any time of year; and on this morning as on every other of the three hundred and sixty-five, the fireplace held coals and ashes and two or three sticks of wood and an insinuating little flame; though the amount of the two last articles varied with the season.

On one side of the chimney stood an old mahogany work-table, a mahogany chair with leather-covered cushion, and a mahogany footstool. The leather was of no particular colour except that of Time's bestowing; only in one corner could Chryssa's eyes find out a small spot of blue; and she often thought how splendid the chair must have been in the days of its glory. Beneath the work-table was a very small brass-nailed trunk.

Mr. Salisbury's chair, with its three or four large square cushions, had the other corner of the fireplace, and he himself had the chair.

There he sat, reading the newspaper when Chryssa came in; and Brutus lay on the rug, and agreed to all his master's notions about the fire. For Brutus had grown old, too; and was no longer in so frisky a mood as he used to be when Sybil was a little child; when she used to walk round him with most fearful and respectful admiration, and say, "Poor little dog! poor little dog! he won't hurt you!"

She might have walked over him now, and he would hardly have raised his head. When Chryssa bid him good morning he only beat the floor pretty hard with his tail.

The breakfast-table was set with blue India china, and the peacock tea-service; the humming-birds fluttered about the honeysuckles on the piazza; the swallows twittered round their nests; and the sun sent his long glad beams, past birds and bees and flowers, through the front windows of the old parlour, till they rested upon

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the breakfast-table and Chryssa. No wonder they all looked bright.

"Well," said Mr. Salisbury; "good morning. Have you slept off the blues?"

"Oh, yes," said Chryssa, "but I didn't know I had any. What are blues, grandpapa?"

"Blues?" said he, looking at her over his spectacles. "Why, blues—are not precisely reds. You've heard of rose colour, haven't you?"

"Oh yes," said Chryssa again. "My damask rose is rose-colour. But what makes those swallows come into the piazza so? And what are they doing?"

"Doing indeed!" said Mr. Salisbury, looking over his spectacles again, but out of the window this time and with very different eyes. "Why, they're building under the piazza-roof. I've had the nests knocked down half a dozen times, and I think they are built up all the faster."

"Had the nests knocked down?" exclaimed Chryssa.

"To be sure. Just see what a mess they make," he added, as a bit of mud fell from the loaded beak of a swallow. "And only look in that corner where the last one was knocked down, and see how dirty the paint is."

"But if there was a nest there, the paint wouldn't look dirty, would it?" said Chryssa.

"No, I suppose it wouldn't," said Mr. Salisbury, "but the nest would."

"Oh, I think they're so pretty!" said Chryssa.

"Those mud nests?"

"Oh yes, grandpapa, I think they're beautiful. And there is a bird inside of one, looking out. How funny his eyes look!"

"About as funny as yours do, I think," said Mr. Salisbury. "Well, the nests shall stay, if you like them."

"Oh, may they?" said Chryssa. "And won't you knock down any more?"

"Not one. The swallows may thank you for it."

"I'm sure I thank you, very much, grandpapa," she

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answered. "I'm so glad the nests may stay. It's such a pity the swallows should have so much trouble for nothing."

Breakfast was now ready, and they sat down to the table; but to Chryssa's sorrow again, her grandmother began to pour out the coffee, and Mr. Salisbury gave her some potato, without one word of thanks to the Giver of all good; but just as if the fine morning, and breakfast, and all their happiness, had come by chance. She had never been there without her uncle before, and did not know the habit of the family. Chryssa felt very much puzzled, and tasted her tumbler of milk and set it down again, feeling not quite sure whether she ought to begin her breakfast.

"What's the matter, Chryssie?" said Mrs. Salisbury, —"the milk isn t sour, is it?"

"Oh, no,' said Chryssa, "it's very good."

"Then why don't you drink it?" said Mr. Salisbury. "Drink it up and have some more."

"Because I haven't thanked God for it, yet," said Chryssa, folding her hands gravely together; "and Aunt Esther says I ought to always thank everybody for everything. She does, if it's ever so little."

Mr. Salisbury swallowed his coffee and set down the cup.

"Wife, give me another," he said. "Why, Chryssa, people don't return thanks till after breakfast, that I ever heard of."

"Oh, but Uncle Ruth always asks a blessing," said Chryssa, "and he says that is one way of thanking God."

"Well," said Mr. Salisbury, "as I'm half through my breakfast you may as well begin yours, and you can talk about this another time."

After breakfast Mrs. Salisbury got ready to go out and walk in the garden, and Chryssa watched her with much pleasure. It was always very amusing to look at her grandmother's prunella shoes—so very different from her

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own little kid ones; and Mrs. Salisbury's sunbonnet, so perfectly white, so beautifully quilted, was worth anybody's attention. An old green silk parasol, antique and faded, completed the outfit; and if the parasol could have been changed into blue satin, it is doubtful whether it would have suited Chryssa so well, or in her opinion have kept off the sun so effectually. She had a kind of reverence for both articles; and could not feel hot while the one was upon her grandmother's head, and the other held over her own.

And in this attire they walked round the garden and visited the pigs—Mrs. Salisbury very busy with her own plans and arrangements, but often ready to hear Chryssa talk; and Chryssa, quite able to be amused in silence whenever it was needful.

Then they came into the house and sat down on a little flight of steps that led from the kitchen to the laundry, to shell the peas for dinner.

"Have you got any little chickens, grandmama?" said Chryssa.

"Yes, dear, a good many: you shall see them after dinner. We've got two broods of bantams."

"What are bantams?" said Chryssa.

"They are little white chickens with feathered legs. They look as if they had on some of your frilled trousers."

Chryssa was much pleased with the prospect of seeing "such funny chickens;" and the peas being all shelled she went to wash her hands and get ready for dinner

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CHAPTER XII.

A LETTER AND AN ARRIVAL.

Not even a visit to the bantams and the promise of a pair to take home with her, could keep Chryssa's heart at rest all the afternoon. For Aunt Esther had said that perhaps she and Sybil would come "to-morrow," and it was "to-morrow," and "perhaps" is a very unquieting thing.

But though eyes and ears were on the watch for a carriage, none came—except imaginary ones; and the frequent coming of these was not to be endured without growing sad. Chryssa's face became as decidedly in twilight as did all the objects out of doors; and the little sigh now and then, told that her heart had too much pent up within it.

At last, just as the candles were lit, Mr. Salisbury came into the room with a letter in his hand.

"Wife," said he, "do you know anybody in this neighbourhood named Nerissa Botherford?"

"Oh, I'am sure it's for me!' said Chryssa. "You don't read it right, grandpapa, that's all. Please give it to me!"

"Oh—I see!"—said Mr. Salisbury. "Maybe it is—'Miss Chryssa Rutherford'—*that's* it. But you can't read the first word."

"Ah, but please to read it to me!" and the tearful words were not to be trifled with. Mr. Salisbury sat down by the little stand, put on his glasses, and read as follows:—

"'Dear Chryssa,—How are you all? Was not grandpapa very much surprised to see you?' (No, not a bit.) 'I suppose you play with shells a great

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deal. Do you want to come home? Don't you want to see Aunt Esther and all of us very much?' (Not she!) 'We manage some way or other to go on very pleasantly without you.'

"Upon my word," said Mr. Salisbury, looking over his spectacles at Chryssa, "she don't deserve to have her letter read. I think I'll put it in the fire, and you and I'll play backgammon."

"Oh no, please don't!" said Chryssa.

"Well, *I* would if it was my letter. However—'We manage to get along very pleasantly without you, but I have not played with dolls once since you went away. Yesterday I brought up—Cuper, Caterpillar'—What the mischief's this?"

"It must be Cupid," said Chryssa, laughing and crying together. "That's my kitten."

"Oh, Cupid—'I brought up Cupid and Bess, and warmed a cushion for them; and they were here the greatest part of the morning.' (That's one way to bring up kittens!) 'I sucked one of those oranges grandmama gave me and then played with the skin.'

"Wife," said Mr. Salisbury, laying the letter on the table and his spectacles on the letter, "I wish you would take care what you give those children. Here's Sybil sucking oranges and then playing with the skin!—It's no wonder she looks pale. What's the matter, Chryssa? I don't see much to laugh at. And here's more of the same kind.—'I made some maple sugar fine, and then partly dried it. Aunt Esther was going to write to you, but she is washing hard'—what on earth does that mean? Can't she get a washerwoman?"

"Oh, it can't be that, grandpapa," said Chryssa, "because you know she never does wash."

"Well, then, I'll wipe my spectacles and look again—it's '*sewing* hard to be able to come to Cleaveland tomorrow evening or Thursday morning. Cupid is this morning lying on the green cloth.' (She'd much better be in the barn.) 'I am curing myself of sucking my

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tongue, but you must not go and beg for me. Give my love and a kiss to all, not forgetting yourself. Aunt Esther says she does not know what to do without you.

"'Your affectionate sister,

"'SYBIL RUTHERFORD.'"

"Well, there's some sense in the end," said Mr. Salisbury as he folded up the letter, "but how you're to kiss yourself, *I* don't know. I suppose I may deliver that message. Now what shall I do with this?"

Chryssa stretched out her hand for the letter, nor did they part company the whole evening. Sometimes she would try to spell out a sentence or two, and sometimes she was quite satisfied to see the outside of it, folded up in her hand.

"Grandmama," she said, a little before bed-time, "if you're not *very* busy, would you please tell me about the time when you used to go to eat clams, when you were a little girl?"

"To be sure I will," said Mrs. Salisbury; and she took Chryssa on her lap and began:—

"When I was a little girl, about as old as Sybil, I used to go to school and have a holiday every Saturday. And sometimes, when all the girls had been very good and had learned their lessons well, our mothers used to give us leave to have what we called a pic-nic."

"That was to go and eat clams?" said Chryssa.

"Yes, that was what we meant by it. So then the first thing was to go down to the shore and see old Carlin. Old Carlin was a fisherman, and he had a beautiful little boat which he called the *Mayflower*. And he was a very nice, careful man, and very good to us if we behaved ourselves; so that our mothers knew we might be trusted with him. And we used to go on Saturday morning and ask old Carlin if he would take us to Snipe Island in the afternoon; and perhaps he would say that the tide would not do for Snipe Island, but he would take us to Shell Island; and he would say

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we must be sure and come by four o'clock, and not keep him waiting.

"Then at four o'clock we were all there, and each girl had her basket. Some brought tea and coffee, and some brought milk and sugar, and cake and bread, and cold ham, and butter, and pepper and salt, and a clean table-cloth, and a tea-kettle, and cups and saucers, and plates, and gridiron. And the *Mayflower* was all ready too; and when all the children and baskets were nicely stowed away, we set out.

"Then when we got to the island we used to run about, and play at tag, and pick up shells, while old Carlin was getting clams."

"How did he get them?" asked Chryssa.

"Why, he used to take a spade and dig them out of the mud, or wade in the water and pick them up. And when he had got enough he would call out, 'Come, girls!—it's time for supper.'

"And the boys all stopped their play, and ran to pick up drift-wood and make a fire, and the girls filled the tea-kettle from the beautiful little spring and put it on to boil."

"What was drift-wood?" said Chryssa.

"It was wood that had fallen into the sea, and drifted and tossed about for a great while, till some high tide threw it up on the shore,—and then it lay there in the sun and became as dry as could be. And when we had made the fire, we put up two cross sticks and a straight one across, and on that we hung the teakettle. Then, when there were plenty of red hot coals we put our gridiron down, and roasted the clams, and then we had tea."

"It tasted good, didn't it?" said Chryssa.

"Indeed it did! And when we had eaten enough, we washed up all the cups and packed our baskets, and then went to play again. And when the sun was just dipping into the sea, old Carlin would call out—

"'Come girls!—it's time to go home.'

"And then we all stopped play and got into the *May-*

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flower again, and reached home just before it was quite dark—tired enough, I can tell you."

By this time Chryssa was tired too, and so near asleep, that she almost forgot to bid Mr. Salisbury good night.

Sybil had made a bright suggestion about the shells, and next morning Chryssa begged that she might have them to play with.

Their play with shells was very peculiar. The children named them after a fashion of their own, calling some pigs, and some elephants, and some cows, as any fancied resemblance directed. And when the back of a large shell had been slightly waxed, a little shell could be made to stay thereon, and so ride about in triumph.

So, after breakfast, Mrs. Salisbury took a bunch of keys from her bag—where they had rubbed and jingled about till every key was as bright as a looking-glass—and proceeded upstairs to what was called the spare room.

It was furnished in a peculiar style.

The chairs were of some light yellow wood, curiously cut and carved on the back into various figures and devices—the centre-piece of this open-work being always some animal. It was Chryssa's delight to go from one chair to another, admiring the stag's head always thrown back and the cow's tail always laid round upon one side, and the tiger, the elephant, and the wild boar, always displaying their own peculiar marks of ferocity; until from leaning so long upon the cane chair-bottoms her elbows were so deeply indented and honey-combed as to be in themselves matter of curiosity.

The bureau in this room was just as unlike all other bureaus as the chairs were unlike all other chairs. Old dark wood, most carefully inlaid with two other and lighter coloured kinds, suited well the carved drawers and dovetailed top; and the bureau's contents were the best of all. It always seemed to Sybil and Chryssa a true conjuror's bag, from which their grandmother

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brought forth curiosities that had no rivals elsewhere, and no limit but her will. Coins, engravings, scent-bottles, pretty boxes, sweet-smelling nuts, shells, pictures, stones,—too many things indeed to be mentioned, were here stowed away; and it was from one of these bureau-drawers that Mrs. Salisbury now took a large box of shells, and carried it down into the parlour for Chryssa's amusement.

But it was like the king who bought Punch, and when he got him home found that Punch was nothing by himself. What were the shells to Chryssa without Sybil?—and how could she play with them? She could, to be sure, put a pig on an elephant and push them about; but if the pig fell off, there was nobody to laugh, and if it stuck on, there was nobody to admire. She was soon tired of the shells and asked for the billiard balls—two or three odd ones which seemed to have rolled into the house no one knew how, on purpose for playthings. Mrs. Salisbury got out the balls from her work-table drawer, and Chryssa sat down on the floor to roll them.

But it was poor sport to send the ball off to the corner of the room and then get up and go after it;—she had no heart to slide down on the great chair cushions,—what should she do? Her eye fell upon the little brass-nailed trunk; and begging for the key, Chryssa pulled out the trunk and began to examine and arrange its contents. Tapes, thread, needles, and buttons, were unfolded and refolded;—for the fifty-first time, at least, Chryssa looked at the old-fashioned thread-case which was used in revolutionary years, and heard her grandmother tell how scarce everything was then; and how she had often hemmed a cambric handkerchief and a brown towel with the same needle.

At the bottom of the trunk lay a little package nicely pinned up in white paper, containing some of Sybil's attempts at painting. Curious drawings they were; little baskets such as nobody ever saw, filled with flowers that nobody ever heard of. But their colours

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were bright, and Sybil painted them, reason enough for their interest in Chryssa's eyes; and when she had looked and talked herself tired, Mrs. Salisbury took her up on her lap and sang—

"Little Bo-peep
Fell fast asleep,"

till Chryssa fell asleep too, out of pure sympathy.

What waked her up? She didn't know at first, when she started up and rubbed her eyes, only she thought she had been dreaming of riding to church. But it was very dark in the room, and she couldn't see anything distinctly, till at that moment candles came in; and then she saw that Mrs. Salisbury was smiling at her; and looking round, there stood Sybil, and Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford were just behind. Oh, how glad Chryssa was! and her spring to them told them so instead of words, indeed as words could not. She was too happy that evening, and talked away like a little cricket. How gladly she shared her little white bed with Sybil, how charmingly they played with shells the next day! Sybil decided that the box wanted putting in order; and they emptied all the different kinds of shells into separate little saucers, and dislodged the runaway little shells which had lodged in cracks and corners, and put them with their proper kind. To be sure the job was rather long and tedious, but it was done at last, and well done.

There were other amusements. Before breakfast Chryssa had espied a peacock's feather in one of the trees before the house; and after several trials Mr. Rutherford had brought down the prize. And then he balanced the long slender thing on his forefinger, to Chryssa's great delight.

"How could it get up in that tree, Uncle Ruth?" she said.

"I suppose the peacock roosted there last night."

"What, up in that tree?"

"Yes; in fine weather they always roost in the tree-

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Chryssa and Mrs. Salisbury, p. 94.

"Little Bo-peep
Fell fast asleep."

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tops, and when it is going to rain they choose some of the lower branches."

"But what made the peacock leave it there?" said Chryssa.

"I suppose it dropped out of his tail," said Mr. Rutherford smiling.

"I hope he don't want it," said Chryssa, as she stroked the long feather, "for I like to have it very much."

"He must do without it," said her uncle. "We should be puzzled to put the feather back again, or to find the right bird. And a peacock's tail-feather is not much of a curiosity to himself, Chryssie."

They went back to Rose Hill that day. The two bantams in the coach-box, in a most uncomfortable state of mind—the children full of pleasure and talk. There was only one thing to be regretted—Chryssa had left her feather at Cleaveland.

But as she remarked, "she could get it next time."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CURIOSITY BOX.

It did not seem likely that the larger box would be soon needed. Collecting went on slowly. Whatever became of the dead butterflies, they did not fall in Chryssa's way, and she began almost to doubt of ever finding any. To be sure, she did find a flying grasshopper lying on the walk one day, but he did not look near so pretty with his yellow wings folded up and the brown ones folded over them. He had lost one of his legs too; so, though Chryssa put him in her box, she did not think much of him.

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One morning, as she stood in the grove while the chickens eat their breakfast, she saw on one of the trees what seemed to be the wing of some insect; and looking nearer she found that there was a little hole in the tree and into this hole the insect had crept. It seemed to be dead, for it took no notice of the gentle ascertaining pokes of Chryssa's finger, and at length she carefully pulled it out. It was a curious kind of brown bug, an inch and a half long, and quite dead.

"There," said Sybil, "you see it's worth while to look. No wonder you never found anything before. This you got by taking a little trouble for it."

Chryssa felt half disappointed, nevertheless; it was a bug certainly, but it wasn't a purple butterfly nor even a yellow one. However, as Sybil said, she had got it by taking pains, there was something in that; so the bug went to keep the grasshopper company.

But the little tin box looked very empty.

"I wish I could find something to put in my box, Aunt Esther," she said.

"I wish you could, my dear. Will nothing do but butterflies?"

"Oh, I'd like anything curious," said Chryssa.

"Anything curious. Well, I think I must go curiosity-seeking with you this afternoon; and in the mean time you may have this, if you think it remarkable enough to lie alongside of the brown bug."

It was a silk-worm's cocoon.

"Oh, I like it dearly!" cried Chryssa. "Oh, thank you, Aunt Esther! Where did you get it?"

"I hardly know, dear; I found it this morning among a quantity of old things in a drawer."

"And if the moth should come out and should die, I might keep that too," said Chryssa. Mrs. Rutherford smiled.

"I don't think the moth will ever come out," she said, "I must have had that cocoon a long time."

"Why didn't it come out before, I wonder," said

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Chryssa, "do you think this was once put in hot water?"

"Perhaps so."

"Well, I'm very glad I've got it, and perhaps we'll find some more this afternoon."

In the afternoon, however, Chryssa's patience was sorely tried, for one visitor after another came in, and she began to despair of her walk. They were not people that she and Sybil cared to see, either, and after being "very good" and very tired for some time on the little benches by the fire-place, they jumped up and ran out to play in the hay.

Now it was well that Garret was so good-natured a man; for although the hay itself was in no danger of harm, yet to see the nice cocks which he had carefully put up, so unceremoniously dealt with, was, or might have been, a trial of patience. But he *was* very good-natured; and when Sybil plumped down upon one hay-cock, and Chryssa scrambled up to the top of another, Garret only smiled and shook his head, and told them they were making him "a fine piece of work."

I suppose there never was anything so sweet as hay—nor anything so pleasant as to tumble in it;—certainly these children thought so, as they chased each other from cock to cock, and lay at the bottom, and lay at the top, and rolled all the way down; and regarded the sharp points of the hay which stuck into their elbows and knees as mere trifles of life! No, there never was anything half so pleasant; and their light weight did not do Garret much mischief after all.

At last, fairly tired, they sat themselves down against a large haycock, near the gate, to rest and grow cool.

"I think grasshoppers must be roasted to death," was Sybil's first remark as she fanned herself with her sun-bonnet.

"Perhaps they are," said Chryssa, "only their faces don't get red. And I suppose they *have* to hop."

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"No," said Sybil, "they can walk—I've seen them walking on the road."

"Oh yes, so have I," said Chryssa, "but they look so funny. I don't believe they *could* walk far. Oh dear! I'm afraid we shan't walk a bit this whole afternoon!"

"There comes one of the people, at last," said Sybil: "perhaps the rest will follow him. What book has he got in his hand, I wonder? he had not one when he came. I hope he hasn't been borrowing some of mine. I do believe that's my 'Sandford and Merton.' Run and see, Chryssa."

"Oh no!—I can't," said her sister.

"But you must! Run quick, or he'll be out of the gate."

"Well, why don't you go?" said Chryssa. "I don't want to know what he's got."

"No, I want you to go; now Chryssa run! I tell you he'll be gone."

"I don't care if he is," said Chryssa, getting up very slowly; for she didn't like the job, though Sybil's seniority and earnestness prevailed according to custom. "I wish he was, I'm sure! What shall I say?"

"Tell him he can't have it—that I am reading it.'

By no means resolved to tell him that, or anything, Chryssa set forth and walked towards the gate; rather sidling along among the haycocks, and in perfect uncertainty what to do. By sundry timid looks, however, she satisfied herself of what she was most willing to believe, that the book in question was not "Sanford and Merton;" so waiting till the gate closed upon the gentleman, returned to her sister.

"Well, what did he say?"

"I didn't ask him—I didn't think it looked like 'Sandford and Merton.'"

"What did it look like? any of my books? my 'Son of a Genius?'"

"I don't know," said Chryssa.

"Did you go up to him?"

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"No, I was afraid to go."

"Afraid!" said Sybil. "Well you *are* a nice child to do anything!" and she got up and walked to the house.

All the visitors were gone, but it was too late for a walk. Mr. Rutherford presently came home, and they had tea, and after tea a great romp with the kittens.

Cupid and Bess were in a most flourishing state of health and happiness, and not even the older part of the family could help laughing at their antics; while the mirth of the children was unmeasured.

Bess would set up her tail in the air, and with a most wild look of ears and eyes catch hold of the green baize with her claws, shake it, then with another set of the tail frisk off, hotly pursued by Cupid—who all this time had lain in close ambush under a chair. Then came a roll and a tumble, a boxing of ears and kicking, a jump off and a standing at defiance, and then another roll and another frisk. Then Sybil would lift up one corner of the cloth and throw it over one or both of the kittens, and such a fuss as there was then! and such a noise when they were released! The kittens played and the children laughed till bedtime, and neither one nor the other knew how the evening passed.

The next morning, as usual, Chryssa was out very early among the flowers; but as she stepped carefully on the border, where her foot would do no harm, to look at a little caper-tree just then in fruit, she was checked by something drawn tight across her forehead—as if the fairy of the caper-tree had put up a light barrier. Chryssa drew back, and then saw what seemed like a spider's web—all begemmed with dewdrops, and stretching from a rosebush on one side of the caper-tree to a rosebush on the other. But could it be a spider's web? it looked and felt more like a thread of fine sewing-silk. Her doubts were soon answered; for looking up a little higher she saw the proprietor of this thread and some others like it, in the shape of a very large and beautiful spider. His body was perhaps as large as a common beetle, and

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of a bright yellow colour, but with sundry stripes of black and red; and his legs quite large enough to support it. Chryssa felt really afraid of him, for though he hung there very peaceably in his web she thought he looked fierce enough. *Mentally* she transferred him to her tin box; but as for anything farther, she would hardly have ventured to touch him if he had been dead. So she contented herself with gently touching the lowest thread from time to time with her finger, and thinking how very strong it was, how beautiful the spider, and how very little she would like to have him jump upon her. Moreover, she wondered if he had stayed out all night in the dew, and if such remarkable spiders were to be found in anybody's garden but their own. She was just running to call her uncle to see the insect, when she herself was called to breakfast.

At breakfast the children were told that Mrs. Lee, a sister of Mrs. Rutherford's, was coming to stay a week at Rose Hill. This announcement gave great pleasure and plenty to talk about.

"Is Aunt Eunice going to bring all her children?" said Sybil as they sat upstairs after breakfast.

"No—only Fulvi. Kitty stays at home to keep house."

"Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, who had been thinking in very grave silence, "do you like Fulvi? Is she a nice child?"

"What do you think, Chryssie?"

"I haven't seen her for a great while," said Chryssa, with a considering look. "I don't know—I used to like her very much. But I was thinking of what she did about the gooseberries. Was that right?"

"What did she do about the gooseberries? I'm sure I don't know."

"Don't you remember, Aunt Esther, when I was a very little child and told a lie?"

The case was this. When Chryssa was indeed a very little child, Fulvi Lee paid a visit at Rose Hill; and she and Chryssa one morning helped Mrs. Rutherford to pull

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the stems off a quantity of gooseberries. Having occasion to go down stairs, Mrs. Rutherford left the two children and the dish in the upper hall, bidding them take no more berries, as she thought they had eaten enough. But the temptation was too strong, and Chryssa took one more—just one.

When Mrs. Rutherford came back, she asked if they had touched the fruit; and upon another temptation Chryssa answered, though hesitatingly, "No."

"Yes, she did," said Fulvi: "I saw her take one."

There was no need that anybody should say a word more, for Mrs. Rutherford's look of sorrow called forth tears enough to be long remembered; and even now Chryssa could not speak of the event without a sad face. But though she did not wish that Fulvi had kept silence, her speaking did not quite suit Chryssa's notions of highmindedness.

They went to walk that afternoon, to see what could be found in the way of curiosities; and Chryssa carried a little basket which gave Sybil at least one laugh.

"Do you think you will get that basket full of butterflies in one walk?" she said.

"But I must take something," said Chryssa.

"Very true," said Mrs. Rutherford, "and a basket so small that it would hold only one butterfly would hardly keep that from tumbling out. See, here is something curious already." She had picked up a twig with one or two brown rough-looking nobs on it near the end.

"These little knots of wood?" said Sybil. "Oh, Aunt Esther, you are laughing at her now yourself."

"Indeed, I am not; in the first place they are not knots of wood, and in the second they are very curious."

"Well, what are they then?" said Sybil, a little impatiently.

"They are oak-galls. Some insects, you know, lay their eggs upon leaves and twigs, but there are others which first make a puncture in the twig or the leaf."

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"What is a puncture?" said Chryssa.

"If I were to prick your arm with this pin I should make a puncture in it," said her aunt. "The pin would leave a little bit of hole through the skin. The gall-fly makes such a little hole through the skin of the leaf or the bark of the twig, and in this little hole she deposits an egg; and the substance of the twig being thus wounded grows out over the egg, and by degrees covers it entirely; sometimes with such a rough knob as this, sometimes with a smooth little round ball."

"But what becomes of the egg?" said Sybil. "I should think it would spoil it to be covered up with all that stuff."

"It is that very stuff, as you call it, which preserves it. The egg is kept from too much heat, or cold, or wet; and when the grub is hatched it lives there quite safe through all the stages of its growth, then changes into a chrysalis, and then the little gall-fly eats its way out, and goes to lay its eggs on some other twig. Look, do you see that little hole?"

"Well, that is curious, to be sure," said Sybil. "But what does the worm live on in there?"

"On the substance of the gall."

"Here is one without any hole in it," said Chryssa: "I have turned it round and round."

Mrs. Rutherford cut it open, and there, to be sure, was a little worm.

"I wish you hadn't cut that one, Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, "though it can't be helped, and I am glad we saw the worm, too; but I should like to have one with a hole and one without a hole."

The gall was placed in Chryssa's basket, and they walked on.

"Are galls good for anything?" said Sybil.

"Not this kind; but the oak-galls which are brought from the East Indies, and from those countries that border on the Mediterranean, are very valuable. They are used to make ink, and in dyeing."

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"And do they dye things this pretty brown colour?" said Chryssa.

"No, dear, they dye them black."

The walk had begun with good promise, but as they went on and on, nothing more appeared, though Chryssa's eyes and hands too, hunted about on every side. Flowers there were in abundance, but they were not the things most desired at present; though the beautiful bunches of meadow asclepias, and the more splendid scarlet hibiscus that grew in a wilderness of wild plants by the water, could not be passed without gathering. There were butterflies, too, in plenty; but they only flitted about in the sunshine and refreshed themselves with sips of honey, in perfect disregard of Chryssa and her basket; and she could not find it in her heart to be sorry that they were alive and in such comfortable circumstances. But she did sigh a little, once, when she looked from a great swallow-tail down into her basket.

"Cheer up, Chryssie!" said Mrs. Rutherford, smiling, "collectors of curiosities must never be discouraged."

"But I've found nothing, Aunt Esther, only this one gall—and you found that."

"Well, dear, if patience doesn't give way, it will grow all the stronger for being tried. Disappointments are better than butterflies sometimes, and perhaps we shall find the butterflies to-morrow."

"Well, maybe we shall," said Chryssa, trying hard to look bright, and feeling as some other people have done, that if patience be "a good root" it is not a very sweet one. "I suppose people don't generally find a great deal at once. Will you please to hold my flowers, Aunt Esther, because I can't crawl under the fence with my hands so full."

But when Chryssa had crawled far enough to get exactly under the rails, she called out in a tone of great delight, "Oh, I've found something now! I've found something now! It isn't a butterfly, but it's a beetle!

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A great yellow beetle, with such shining wings! I think he is dead."

The beetle was dead, and so made no objection to Chryssa's picking him up; which indeed she did with a carefulness that could not have hurt a live beetle.

"Don't you mean to come out from under the fence, Chryssa?" said Sybil, who by this time had jumped over.

"Yes, I'm coming," said Chryssa, "but the fence isn't very high—from the ground I mean. Look! isn't he beautiful?"

Even Sybil declared he was "quite pretty," and well satisfied now, Chryssa reached home and ran upstairs for her tin box. Down she came in a minute again, and asked Mrs. Rutherford if she couldn't give her "some little old box."

"Is the tin box full, Chryssa?"

"No, Aunt Esther, but this gall that you gave me is so heavy I'm afraid it will roll about and break my yellow beetle; and I should like another little box so much."

Mrs. Rutherford hunted up an old wafer-box which was just the thing; but as it was thought to be too handsome for the gall, the yellow beetle was shut up there in solitary grandeur.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRYSSA AND HER COUSIN.

"WON'T you come and see me feed the chickens this morning, Uncle Ruth?" said Chryssa.

"Pray do, Uncle Ruth," said Sybil, "it's really curious. Do you know that when Chryssa stoops down

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near the coop, some of the chickens jump up on her back."

"And oh, Uncle Ruth!" added Chryssa, "sometimes all the chickens have run down the bank except one, and when he sees me coming he runs and calls the others, and then they all run home as fast as they can."

"Call each other to breakfast?" said Mr. Rutherford as he followed the children. "That's a likely story!"

"But they really do," said Sybil. "I never saw anything so funny."

"There's nobody here now but Browny," said Chryssa as she ran up to the coop. "Chickie, chickie! Now Uncle Ruth, you watch."

Certainly Browny's behaviour was remarkable. Instead of picking up the meal which Chryssa threw down by the coop, he ran off to the edge of the bank, at the foot of which the other chickens were disporting themselves; and whether he called to them, or whether his appearance alone was to be considered as the breakfast-bell—a kind of telegraphic despatch that Chryssa had arrived—it is true that the whole brood came scampering up just as fast as little legs and half-grown wings could bring them, and that was pretty fast. And when they had eaten enough, and Chryssa came and crouched down by the coop, she had a grey chicken on her head and a white one on her shoulder in no time—exactly as Sybil had said.

"Uncle Ruth," said Chryssa, as they walked back to the house, "do you know that my little bantam-hen made a nest by one of the locust-trees, and there were seven eggs in it; and yesterday she came off with seven little bantam-chickens, and Garrett says she went into the long grass where he couldn't find her. And now he says he's afraid to mow there, for fear he should tread on the chickens."

"He must watch for them to-night," said Mr. Rutherford. "Perhaps the hen will not choose to sleep in the grass, and she may take them back to the nest again."

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It came into Chryssa's head that it would be a fine piece of fun to look for the chickens herself; so she set off for the plat of unmown grass, and Filly went after her.

Filly was a little white dog belonging to the children, and as fond of hay and of play as they were.

By the time Chryssa reached the place where the hen was supposed to lie hid, she had got into a great frolic with Filly.

It was a nice place for a frolic. All about under foot the cut grass lay in soft masses, now higher, now lower; while at the edge of this part of the meadow, redtop and clover lifted their pretty heads, untouched as yet by Garrett's scythe, and swayed and swept to and fro as the summer breeze went by on its wanderings. Chryssa forgot all about the chickens, and began to run races with Filly, and to cover him up with the cut grass; and then she took a run in the grass that was not cut, and as it was rather long for Filly's short legs, he went bounding after—taking leaps that were pretty to see; and no less pretty were his white head and soft, feathery tail, among the sunshiny green grass.

All at once Chryssa heard a queer little noise—not like a hen cluckling or cackling, but such a noise as a hen might make if she should chance to snore. Chryssa jumped out into the clear space and looked about her; and there, cautiously peeping out from among the standing grass, were the red comb and the yellow beak of the little runaway hen.

"Oh, Filly," said Chryssa, "this will never do! and then she danced off away from the bantam, and of course Filly, being an unsuspecting little dog, danced after her; though if he had known what lay hid in the grass he would have danced just the other way, for it would have been his perfect delight to frighten every one of the chickens out of its wits.

But Chryssa got him away to the house, and when he was safely shut up there she went back with Garret to see after the chickens; and before long the whole brood

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with their little feather-footed mother were in a nice coop. Chryssa herself caught several of the little downy things, though they hid among the grass till it was hard to find them.

Mrs. Lee arrived that night, but so late that the children had little more than time to look at each other and then go to-bed. But long before the tired travellers thought of getting up next morning, Chryssa was on the watch for their first movement; and as soon as she heard steps in Mrs. Lee's room she begged for admittance.

Fulvia Lee was putting on her shoes and stockings, and Chryssa stood by to see with her hands behind her.

"I hope you feel rested," she said, "because we shall want to run about a great deal to-day."

"What for?" said Fulvi, who, being a city child, had but limited ideas of running about.

"Because it's pleasant!" said Chryssa; "and to find things. Have you got any green shoes?"

"No," said Fulvi.

"Uncle Ruth bought me a pair last week."

"I have got some red ones," said Fulvia.

"Have you?" said Chryssa: "I dare say they must be very pretty. Are they pink or red?"

"Red," said Fulvi; "they're just as red as mama's shawl."

Chryssa thought something less red would suit her taste better, but she only said, "Did you ever see any purple butterflies?"

"No," said Fulvi again. "I saw two butterflies once, but they were yellow."

"I'm so glad you have come!" said Chryssa, "for now we can look for things together; you shall keep all you find and I'll keep all I find, that'll be fair. Don't you like yellow beetles very much?"

"I don't know what they are."

"Well, they're like—no, they're not like a butterfly

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either, but they've got hard shiny wings, and such sharp feet! my yellow beetle always sticks to my hands when I take him up."

"I shouldn't like them then," said Fulvi.

"Oh yes you would, very much, because they're beautiful. They're dead, you know, they couldn't hurt you. I shouldn't like a live one, either."

"Shall we find any purple butterflies?" said Fulvi.

"Oh yes!" said Chryssa. "At least I haven't found any yet, but I hope we shall. Have you got any little chickens?"

"I haven't got any—I have seen them."

"Well, I've got a great many,—at least, I've got seven of my own and Uncle Ruth lets me feed his."

"Who gave you yours?" said Fulvi.

"Grandmama gave me two old little white ones, when I went to Cleaveland, and the hen made a nest under a tree, and now she's got seven chickens. She took them into the grass, and we had such work to find them! and Filly almost found them too."

"Who's Filly?"

"My little dog—at least, our little dog—Sybil's and mine."

"I mean to have some chickens when I go home," said Fulvia. "I've got two pigeons now."

"Pigeons!" said Chryssa, "Oh, they are beautiful. Henry said he would bring us some next time he came. Are yours fantail pigeons?"

"I think not," said Fulvi. "What are fantail pigeons?"

"They have very curious tails," said Chryssa, "they stretch them out just like a fan. I saw some at Mr. Grandin's. Oh, I wish you'd been there! We saw some silk-worms too; but I'll show you my cocoon. And Aunt Esther says that maybe we'll go to Cleaveland while you're here, and then we shall have such fun!"

"Where is Cleaveland?" said Fulvia, whose imagina-

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tion could hardly keep up with Chryssa's rapid stream of delights, past, present, and future.

"My grandmother lives there," said Chryssa, "and it's a beautiful place, and she's got a great many shells."

"So have I," said Fulvia. "I've got a box full. A man who'd been in a ship a great way off, picked them up, and he gave them to me. I've got some coral, too."

"I've got a coral necklace," said Chryssa. "Now shall we go feed the chickens? Oh no, it'll be too wet. But we can kneel in the chairs by the window, and I'll show you where the coops are. I'll go, and you come when you are ready."

"I'm all ready now," said Fulvi.

"But you haven't said your prayers yet," said Chryssa, stopping short.

"No," said Fulvia. "I don't always; sometimes I do, and sometimes I forget it."

"Well, but you don't forget it now," said Chryssa.

"No," said Fulvia. "Oh, come! I don't want to wait now."

"But you do want a great many other things," said Chryssa. "You want to be well, and to have a pleasant day, and you don't want to say or do anything naughty. I think it's very disagreeable to feel naughty, don't you? And Aunt Esther says we can't help it unless God helps us."

And leaving Fulvi half persuaded of the benefits of saying her prayers, at least when she didn't forget it, Chryssa went down stairs and waited for her in the parlour window.

After breakfast, Mr. and Mrs. Salisbury arrived, and as they had come to spend the day, the horse was taken out of the gig and put to refresh himself in the stable, and the gig was left under the willow tree.

When Chryssa had told all the news about the bantams, and had eaten several pears from her grandmother's basket, she drew Fulvia out of the room.

"Come," she said, "now we'll go and sit in the gig."

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"But I 'm afraid of the horses," said Fulvi.

"Why, there aren't any horses there," said Chryssa "there never was but one to begin with."

"I saw three in the stable," said Fulvi.

"But the gig isn't in the stable—I mean grandpapa's gig, down under the willow tree."

So they ran to the willow tree and clambered into the gig.

Whoever has seen this little vehicle with no horse attached, will remember that the shafts rest upon the ground, so that the seat is in anything but a horizontal position; and this gig was just like all others. It tilted up behind in the most remarkable manner, and why the children liked to stay there is a mystery, but like it they did; and though they slipped and slid off the seat, while the smooth oil-cloth on the floor kept their feet slipping and sliding as well—there they stayed; and talked and jumped in and out until dinner was ready.

"Where have you been all the morning?" said Mr. Salisbury, as the two children came in with glowing and happy faces: "hunting chickens, or choking the cat?"

"Oh no, grandpapa," said Chryssa, "we have been playing in the gig."

"In the gig! why, child, I shouldn't think you could stay there two minutes. You couldn't sit on the seat, I'm positive."

"Oh yes, we did," said Chryssa. "At least, sometimes we stood up, but sometimes we sat down too."

After dinner the children played in the garret for a while, and by the time they were tired of dolls and swinging, Mrs. Rutherford gave them each a string of blue and a string of red beads, which she had just found in her drawer.

Here was work enough for the rest of the day. The strings were immediately cut, and then began the business of re-stringing. It was not easy to get the right sort of needle, for one that was large enough for the

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thread was too large for the beads; and many were the wishes expressed for a horse-hair, which Sybil said would go through any beads that ever were heard of. But this difficulty was got over and the work went on swimmingly. The beads were strung and re-strung in all sorts of fancy patterns—two blue and one red, and two red and one blue, or five red and three blue, or a blue necklace with red stars. Then Chryssa concluded that she preferred simplicity, and her beads were left in one long string of two and two; while Fulvia chose the still simpler style of one and one.

Then Chryssa's string broke, and the beads went rolling over the floor, several of them watching their opportunity to slip into a mouse-hole or a crack, so that Chryssa could by no means get them all again. And then Fulvi very generously offered to give Chryssa some of hers, which Chryssa would not hear of; and when they were at last all in order again, Sybil came and proposed that they should make some earrings for Miss Jenkins. Then little short pieces of thread were filled with beads, and tied so as to make a loop; and several of these loops fastened together made the earring. The great difficulty was how they should be worn, for Miss Jenkins had no very perceptible ears, but Sybil undertook to manage that; and when she had thrust a crooked pin into each side of the doll's head, where her ears ought to have been, the bead loops hung on there well enough, and Miss Jenkins was adorned—at least the children thought so.

"What shall we do now?" said Fulvia, when tea was over, and Mr. and Mrs. Salisbury had gone. "We must do something, Chryssa, because I don't want to get sleepy. Mama would make me go to bed."

"I would just as soon go to bed as not," said Chryssa.

"But you mustn't go till I do. Let's sit down in the corner and you tell me a fairy-tale."

"Oh, I don't know any," said Chryssa. "Sybil knows a great many, and she tells them to me sometimes.

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But she won't come now—she's reading. I know some hymns."

"So do I," said Fulvia; "and I know some little poetry stories. Come, do you begin."

"No, you must begin," said Chryssa, stroking her frock off her lap with great satisfaction.

"Well, I'll begin then," said Fulvi. "It's a story about a little cat and and a bird's nest."

"Oh, that must be beautiful," said Chryssa. "Who taught it to you?"

"My cousin, and she said it was all true.

"Pussy! pussy! mischievous cat!
What in the world would you be at?
Ah, come away,
Pussy, I pray!

"A bird in that hawthorn has her nest;
See what a flutter is in her breast!
Poor little thing,
She fears your spring.

"The fruit of many an hour's toil,
Your little savage paw would spoil.
Leave it alone
Till the young are flown.

"For, pussy, you have enough to eat—
Plenty of other food just as sweet.
It's a shame to kill
When you've had your fill.

"'Tis not of much use to talk to a cat.
A very few mornings after that
The nest was torn,
The old bird forlorn."

"What is forlorn?" said Chryssa.

"Mama said it meant that the bird hadn't anything left in the world that she cared about."

"Why, did the cat eat *all* the young birds?" said Chryssa.

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"Yes, every one of them."

"I hope my cat won't do so," said Chryssa, thoughtfully. "Oh, I think that's perfectly *beautiful!*"

"It's perfectly time to go to bed," said Mrs. Lee, coming up to their corner.

"Oh, but mama," said Fulvi, "Chryssa hasn't said her hymn yet."

"Well, she may say it now then, and I'll hear it too."

"I don't know which to choose," said Chryssa, "but I suppose you'd like them all."

"I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children as lambs to his fold,
I should like to have been with him then.

"I wish that his hands had been placed on my head,
That his arms had been thrown around me,
That I might have seen his kind look when he said,
'Let the little ones come unto me.'

"Yet still to his footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share in his love;
And if I thus earnestly seek him below,
I shall see him and hear him above:

"In that beautiful place he has gone to prepare
For all who are washed and forgiven;
And many dear children are gathering there,
'For of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

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CHAPTER XV.

GOING PLEASURING.

THEY went to Cleaveland. Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Rutherford on the back seat of the carriage, Sybil and Mr. Rutherford on the front, while the no-particular seat between each two was well filled by Fulvi and Chryssa.

A beautiful day it was, with a clear north wind and fast-driving white clouds; the trees bending and swaying, and all the bonnet-ribbons in the carriage in a most animated flutter, and Chryssa's little white tippet sometimes blowing entirely round, at which feat the children all laughed as heartily as if it had been something very funny, and quite unheard of heretofore.

Then Chryssa showed Fulvi the precise spot where she had dropped her parasol, and Sybil pointed out the old house where the robbers used to live. The very horses seemed to catch the spirit of the day, and snorted and tossed their heads as if they too were going visiting.

There was great anxiety to see who would have the first glimpse of the old chimneys; and when they reached the gate, without waiting for Michael to close it and remount, Mr. Rutherford drove straight on to the house himself, the wheels making a delightful sound on the gravel as they went.

The peacock's feather was sought immediately, and found—over the old looking-glass in the parlour. With that Chryssa and Fulvi amused themselves till dinner was ready.

"Where's Fulvi, Aunt Esther?" said Chryssa, who, by the time her turn came to be helped, had discovered that her little companion was not at the table. "Where's Fulvi? I thought I saw her by Aunt Eunice."

"Your aunt sent her to dine in the next room, because the table was so full"

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"Oh, she'll be very lonely there all alone," said Chryssa. 'Mayn't I go and eat my dinner in the other room too?"

"To be sure, if you wish."

So Chryssa got down from her chair, and taking the big dinner-plate (she had no mind to leave that) in both hands, and it was all that both could do to carry it, she marched off to join Fulvi in her temporary banishment, and they eat their dinner together very contentedly.

Then they went out, and Chryssa displayed all the wonders of the place, dwelling at large upon the varied and marvellous excellences of every tree, and flower, and shrub. Suddenly they came upon a little basket waggon, standing empty among the trees.

"Oh, see there!" cried Fulvi; "now we can ride."

"But I wonder whose it is," said Chryssa.

"I think it's that lady's that has the baby," said Fulvi; "the lady that wears such a great many yellow ribbons on her cap."

"Well, we'll get in, at any rate," said Chryssa; "we shan't hurt the waggon, if it is that lady's."

"But we can't both get in," said Fulvi.

"Oh yes, we can; you get in first and sit on that seat; now curl up your feet and I'll get in. Have you got room enough?" she said, when they had fidgeted for a while as well as they could for want of room.

"I haven't got much," said Fulvi; "I think if we were in mama's trunk, now, the top wouldn't shut down."

Both children laughed very heartily at this conceit.

"I think it wouldn't," said Chryssa, "there'd be too much in it—two frocks and two aprons too many. Isn't it pretty to see the trees hang down all round us so?"

"Yes," said Fulvi; "but what makes them hang down?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Chryssa. "How nice it is here! it won't tumble our frocks much, and it's so pleasant. Don't you think it's a pretty house?"

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"Yes," said Fulvi; "but not so pretty as yours—I 'd rather be there."

"Oh no, it 's not so pretty as ours; I should think nobody's house is; but I like to be here though. Aren't your feet very warm?"

"Yes, and I can't move them a bit."

"Well, let 's get out then, and I 'll show you some more things. Oh! there are the hydrangeas; see, they are in those boxes, and they have pink flowers; and sometimes people put stuff on the ground and then the flowers are blue—no, they 're pink—I forget which it is, but they 're different, somehow. I think they 're beautiful, don't you?"

"Yes," said Fulvi; "are they grandmama's?"

"Why, she isn't your grandmama, she 's mine," said Chryssa, quite forgetting the ownership of the hydrangeas to assert her own claim to Mrs. Salisbury.

"But she is mine, too?" said Fulvi.

"I don't know," said Chryssa; "but she *can't* be yours!—she 's mine, you know."

At this clear summing up of the evidence, the children met Sybil, and Chryssa proposed that they should visit the pigs.

"They aren't pretty," said Sybil; "I 've been to look at 'em; there no little ones, but only two ugly big ones. Let 's go the granary, and build cob-houses."

And away they all ran to the granary; and with hard labour of three pair of hands they had soon reared a most imposing cob edifice—not perhaps like any other house that ever was built, but still "very fine."

"Now, if we could only set fire to it," said Sybil, "it would make such a splendid blaze."

"Let 's go and ask grandpapa if we may," said Chryssa, and off they all ran again, out of breath with eagerness and the expected conflagration. But Mr. Salisbury looked grave at the proposal.

"Will you pay for my granary, if you burn it down?" he said.

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"Why, no, grandpapa! but we don't want to burn down the granary—it's only our cob-house."

"Only your cob house made of my cobs," said he "Well, you're welcome to them, so far as that goes. But did you never hear of one house setting another on fire?"

"But this is so little, and the granary is so big," urged the children.

"And how far is the little house from the big one?—as far as I am from the window?"

"Oh no," said Sybil, "as far off as the mantel-piece."

"I don't think it will do," said he, shaking his head; "but look round, Chryssa, and tell me what you see on the table."

"I don't see anything but tea-things, grandpapa. Oh, you mean tea is ready."

"Precisely, and that's better than cob-houses, any day. So now we'll have tea, and to-morrow we'll find a substitute for the fire—we 'll try some water instead."

It was decided that next morning they should all set off for the shell-banks. Sybil begged that she might go in the coach with Mr. and Mrs. Salisbury, and the rest were to go in their own carriage.

The morning was beautiful, and the horses were stamping at the front door at the very minute for which they were ordered. Sybil provided herself with a book, and entered the coach in a very satisfied state of mind; and she looked so particularly comfortable there, that perhaps Chryssa might have begged to go in the coach too, if she had not remembered Fulvi. And besides, to say truth, it was not a little doubtful whether Sybil's feet would willingly give up the second half of the front seat, where they had immediately taken possession. However, if she had more room than Chryssa, she had not so much fresh air, and she could not look about so well; but probably with her book she didn't care much about that.

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Chryssa cared about it and so did Fulvi: both children were as wide awake as they could be, watching and rejoicing in every new thing.

By degrees the country changed as they drove on: meadows were lost in sandbanks and the road itself became sandy, so that the feet of the horses sunk deep at every step. Then came the sea-breeze, fresh with the smell of the salt water; and now and then the water itself could be seen, far away beyond the sand banks.

"I fear the tide will be in when we get there," said Mr. Rutherford, "and then we shall see no oysters to-night."

"Where do oysters come from, Uncle Ruth?" said Chryssa.

"From the bottom of the water—there they live and grow fat."

"But how do people know where they are?"

"Sometimes I suppose they are found by accident, sometimes by a search in what seem promising places. Often the fishermen make oyster beds for themselves. What would you think of planting oysters?"

"I should like it," said Fulvi, "for then I could have just as many as I wanted."

"Yes, if they didn't die," said Chryssa. "My flowers die sometimes when I plant 'em."

"Planting oysters is done in a very different way. The fishermen take a peculiar net, which is fastened to three slender bits of iron, and drag it along the bottom of the sea so that the oysters are forced into it."

Then when they draw up the net, they find old shells, and bits of wood and stone with the young oyster brood fastened to them. These shells and stones the men throw into some creek or arm of the sea, and there the little oysters, which are very, very small at first, grow and fatten, and in two or three years are large enough for you to eat."

"For you, Uncle Ruth" said Chryssa—"I like the little ones best. But do the oysters stick fast to these stones when they grow up?"

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"I cannot answer for all grown-up oysters," said Mr. Rutherford smiling, "but I believe they are generally found holding fast to something solid and substantial; and often the shells lose their natural shape and take that of the rock or sea plant to which they cling."

"Uncle Ruth," said Chryssa after a pause, and speaking rather doubtfully, "what kind of things are oysters?"

"What kind of things?—very good things, I think."

"But I mean" said Chryssa, "have they got any sense—do they know anything?"

"Enough for all their purposes. An oyster knows that he must open his shell when the tide is coming in, and shut it when the tide is going out. It is said too, by people who know more of them than I do, that oysters are very sensitive to sounds, smells, and light. It is certain that if you sprinkle salt on one that is out of water, he will immediately open his shell; and fishermen say that in clear water you can see the oysters close their shells when the shadow of a boat passes over them."

By this time the carriages had reached the little shell-bank hotel, and the children were eager to go at once to the beach to look for curious things; for Chryssa had some hope that she might find more than shells.

Michael was the first person who picked up anything, and his prize was an immense conch shell, which he brought and presented to Chryssa; although it was not only very ugly, but as much as she could well lift. Chryssa felt doubtful of its being "a shell" at all; and by Sybil's advice she laid it quietly down on the sand again, after Michael had gone away.

They walked about for a long time, and Mr. Rutherford showed the children a star-fish, which he said was the oyster's worst enemy; and he explained to them how it clasps its rays round the shell of the oyster and remains there until the oyster is dead; after which the shell opens, and the star-fish can eat the fish at his leisure.

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Pretty shells were not plentiful—the children were fain to content themselves with a few tiny clam and scallop shells—valuable for the same reason as the brown bug of the locust-tree—and one or two mussels which Chryssa admired for their fine blue colour; and then they walked back to tea and oysters.

The hotel was full; one large room was all that could be had, and in that the ladies and the children bestowed themselves, while the gentlemen were to sleep somewhere and somehow upon sofas. This room, however, was well supplied with beds, and among the rest there were two cots for Sybil and Chryssa—who thought it a remarkable piece of good fortune. Sybil especially, went whisking about the room, talking and laughing in a state of great excitement, and at last sprang upon her cot with so much energy that "down came lullaby, baby and all," as the song says,—Sybil and the cot lay on the floor.

Nothing was hurt, however, except the cot, but that was a ruin; and there was no help for it—Chryssa must give up her cot to Sybil and creep into some little place in the large bed.

But they were all too tired to lie awake, and the first half of the night passed off very quietly. Then Chryssa waked in a violent fit of crying, which of course aroused the rest. What could be the matter?

It was not easy to find out; and the child's grief, though unaccountable, was so very heart-felt, that Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Rutherford cried for sympathy. At last Chryssa found words to tell, that she had dreamed her father came to life, and that he looked like Uncle Ruth, and that he died again.

"And he said," added Chryssa, bursting into another fit of tears, "he said that Sybil had killed him because she wouldn't study her lessons!"

It was long before Chryssa could be soothed and comforted, and then she rather sobbed herself to sleep.

But the effects of the dream were pretty well slept off

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before morning, and after another meal of oysters and another walk after shells, the whole party set out for home.

"I declare," said Mr. Salisbury, when they had driven a few miles, "I never remembered that broken bedstead!—however, I shall be there again in a week or two, and the man certainly added enough to the proper amount of his bill, to pay for two or three bedsteads."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE END OF THE SUMMER.

"UNCLE RUTH," said Chryssa, as they sat at breakfast one morning about a week after the Lees had taken their departure, "isn't it very wrong for spiders to kill flies?"

"What had we for dinner yesterday?" was her uncle's strange reply.

"Why, I don't know, Uncle Ruth. Oh yes, you said it was mutton. But then I was talking about the spiders."

"And I am talking about the mutton. Do you know where it comes from, and how we get it?"

"Yes," said Chryssa, with a grave face, "I remember you told me once;" and then after a pause she added, "Ah! but we must have dinner, Uncle Ruth."

"And so must the spider."

"Then it's right for him to catch flies?"

"To be sure it is—just as right as for your chickens to catch grasshoppers. You never thought they were doing wrong, did you?"

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"Oh no," said Chryssa, "but Garret says it makes them grow fat."

"And are spiders in duty bound to keep themselves thin?" said Mr. Rutherford, laughing. "Then there's your cat, Chryssa—what do you think of that mouse she caught yesterday?"

"I know," said Chryssa, "and Fulvi says her cousin's cat caught ever so many birds."

"And so will yours, I've no doubt."

"It's very bad," said Chryssa, "I don't like to think about it. But then, Uncle Ruth, I'd a great deal rather see the chickens eat, than the spiders; I don't like to see the flies caught—it's disagreeable."

"That is partly because you don't like the spiders, I fancy," said Mr. Rutherford, "and don't care whether they have anything to eat or not; though I must confess that to see an insect caught in a trap and then slain and eaten in cold blood, *is* more disagreeable than to see it picked up and swallowed at a mouthful. But what put all this in your little head?"

"Why, Uncle Ruth, yesterday Sybil and I went over to Mrs. Delue's, and we went up into their garret to see Maria's plaything; and Theodore came up too, and he caught all the flies he could find and put them into a great spider's web that was there. And Sybil said he ought not to do so, and he said he ought, and that spiders wanted to eat just as much as anything else. And then I wondered whether they ought to have anything to eat, and whether it was right to catch flies for them."

"Spiders certainly want to eat," replied Mr. Rutherford, "and they do no wrong in spinning their webs and eating all they can catch; but I think we must stop there. I should be very sorry to amuse myself with killing anything—even grasshoppers for the fattening of the bantams, Chryssie. So we may let the spiders provide their own dinner."

"Are spiders of any use?" said Sybil. "I mean does anything eat them?"

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"Yes; birds, and some large insects—wasps for example. If you were to open the nest of a kind of mason wasp, you would find a number of imprisoned spiders; put there for the young grub to feed on when it is first hatched."

"Uncle Ruth," said Chryssa, you remember that great yellow spider—oh no, you didn't see it either—but its web was *so* strong! I think it was stronger than the silk thread you showed me at Mr. Grandin's."

"Well?" said Mr. Rutherford.

"Well, Uncle Ruth,—why don't people make spiders spin for them, and let 'em be of some use?"

"I don't know how one could *make* a spider spin," said Mr. Rutherford, "but people have tried the experiment of shutting them up in cages, and then using the silk which they spun for themselves."

"And was it good? did it make nice things?"

"Very nice things of some kinds—such as required only a short thread. But the plan didn't work very well, for the spiders sometimes left spinning and took to eating each other up."

"That's just like them!" said Chryssa. "Do you know Uncle Ruth, the other day I found a spider's web on a currant bush, and there were two yellow butterflies' wings in it! and they were all broken, too."

"Oh, ho!" said Mr. Rutherford. "So now we have the source of this little jet-d'eau of indignation against spiders. Well, to come from them to ourselves, I am going to Courtland next week, and I think you had all better go too. What do you say?"

Everybody liked the plan very much, and the children immediately began to make additional little plans of their own.

"I'll get grandmama to take me to town and buy us each a basket," said Sybil: "we must have something to carry books and everything in."

"And Uncle Ruth," said Chryssa, "won't you please to bring us home a very little candy to put in our

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baskets? because we might be *very* hungry on the boat."

"And as the baskets are to carry everything they must have everything to carry," said her uncle smiling. "The candy shall be forthcoming, Chryssie, I promise you."

This was Friday, and they were to go the following Tuesday. Of course all had to be busy; at least Mrs. Rutherford had, and the children were or fancied themselves equally occupied.

That day Michael brought home a bundle, and it proved to be made up of sundry pairs of socks, striped with all the colours of the rainbow; not up and down, but round and round—something like what worsted workers call chené.

"Sit down and try them on Chryssie," said Mrs. Rutherford, handing her a pair of which the prevailing colours were fawn and blue.

"But they are not mine," said Chryssa.

"Do you think they would fit me?" said Mrs. Rutherford, holding out her foot. "Why, Chryssa, didn't you know that your old socks were worn out?"

Chryssa sat down on the floor without more delay, and the two bare feet were quickly succeeded by two encased in the chené socks. Chryssa curled and uncurled her toes with great satisfaction.

"They 're so nice!" she said, "so soft and warm. I think I like this pair best. Oh, I don't know either—there's one with pink stripes—and another with purple Now, Aunt Esther, which do you think prettiest?"

"I advise you not to like one better than the rest," said Mrs. Rutherford, smiling; "because if you preferred the blue you might not properly enjoy the pink—or a recollection of the pink might efface the glory of the purple."

Chryssa laughed, and pulled off the blue socks that they might be marked with the others.

The baskets were got, and pretty they were; both alike, of green and white wicker-work, only Sybil's was

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somewhat the largest. This was Monday, and in the afternoon Mr. Rutherford brought home a paper of candy that far exceeded Chryssa's modest request for "a very little."

It was delightful to pack the new baskets; to expend a great deal of trouble and ingenuity in making things lie close, where there was room enough for them to lie as they would.

"What book shall I take, Aunt Esther?" said Chryssa.

"I wouldn't take any, my dear."

"But Sybil is going to take one; she has got 'Rose and Emily' in her basket."

"Well take one, then, though I don't believe you will read much. Take that little red book that lies on your shelf; what's the name of it?"

"Oh, my 'Grateful Tribute'; "that is the very thing."

"I will put this at the bottom," said Chryssa, pulling out of her basket the little handkerchief, and the little bottle of Cologne, and the small paper of candy, "it will go best there."

"But then you 'll have to unpack all your basket when you want to read," said Sybil.

"Well, where shall I put it?" said Chryssa; "if I put it on the top, the cover don't shut tight, because the book's so square; and besides then I should have to unpack my basket to get at the candy."

"I advise you to pack the basket just in the way you think best," said her aunt; "consider and judge for yourself."

So, after a good deal of consideration and trying, Chryssa laid the little square book at the bottom, and the paper of candy upon that; while the little space at one end of the basket held the Cologne bottle, and the little space at the other the pocket-handkerchief. And the cover shut down tight, and Chryssa felt perfectly satisfied.

Then, before she went to bed, she put on a chair every

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thing she would want in the morning; the dress and the gloves, and the clean trousers and stockings. The last thing was to set the little basket there too, as if that could possibly be forgotten!

Tuesday morning rose very dark; which was indeed no fault of the morning—for sky and stars were as clear as could be—but only of those people who would get up before it was light.

Chryssa had no mind to be of the number, and it was not until "Wake up, Chryssa!" had been several times repeated, that she opened her eyes. Then she was bolt upright and had pulled off her nightcap in a moment, after which she proceeded to wake up at her leisure and to ask questions; for the moving lights and figures about her were somewhat bewildering.

"What's the matter, Aunt Esther? does it rain? aren't we going?"

"If you can resolve to get up," said her aunt. "I shouldn't like to go and leave you in bed."

"But what makes it so dark?"

"What makes it so dark? Why, because it isn't light yet. The sun isn't thinking of getting up any more than you are."

"It seems I am not the only person who can lie abed," observed Sybil.

"Especially at four o'clock in the morning," said her aunt.

Chryssa was out of bed directly. "How I like to dress by candlelight!" she said.

"Yes, it's pleasant enough, once in a while," said Sybil.

"Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, pausing with one black shoe held ready for her foot, "have you got my green shoes in the trunk?"

"Yes, and the green shoestrings."

"Ah, you needn't laugh at me—I thought may be you might forget to put them in, and then I might want them."

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Breakfast was ready before people were ready to eat it, but as nobody wanted to eat a great deal, they had time enough. Only of course everybody was in a hurry after breakfast—Mr. Rutherford supposing they should be left, and one trunk refusing to be locked; and then they were driving off very fast. Both baskets were tightly grasped lest they should run away—both little faces wore a look of complete satisfaction.

It was too dark to see porpoises as they crossed the ferry that morning, and I don't know whether people who were on a journey to Courtland would have thought them worth looking at. The thing most to be desired was that the boat should make haste, and that the horses should trot as fast as possible across the city. It was all done in good time, and they were on the deck of the *Morpheus* full ten minutes before the last bell rang.

Not idle minutes those. All of the human race that one could see were hurrying about in a most confused state of mind; and the boat herself was puffing off steam, but in a more regular and business-like fashion; while her paddles dashed forward and then back, and as if she were only withheld by the creaking cables from starting forth on her way. There was a minute of great noise and bustle—the cables were slipped from the great wharf posts—and "Now we are off!" cried Sybil, while Chryssa stood silently watching how fast the wharf sailed away, and what a long line of foam there was between them already. Singling out one particular wave in the boat's wake, she tried to keep her eye on it; and by the time she had so chosen about twenty and lost them every one, Chryssa felt sure that the thing was impossible.

By this time, too, she was tired, and wanted a seat, but not one could be found; she had chosen to watch the foam, and other people had chosen to take the chairs. What was to be done? Chryssa was really tired; and besides, if she stood up how could she read her "Grateful Tribute," or eat candy, or, in fact, do

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anything else? and to sit on Mr. Rutherford's lap was almost as bad, and the half of Sybil's stool was not very inviting, for there was no back to it.

"I'll go and look for a chair," said Chryssa; "maybe there's one standing behind somebody."

"I'm afraid there'll be somebody in it," said Mrs. Rutherford, "but you may look, if you won't go out of sight."

And Chryssa looked and looked. She picked her way round about among the crowd, stepping over some people's feet, and other people's umbrellas; now brought up short by a carpet-bag, and now by an immense wicker-basket. The people not only had the chairs, but they had the floor too, and some had more chairs than one. But as grown-up people always think that children can do without the comforts and conveniences of life, no lady moved her book and parasol, and no gentleman his boots from one of those extra chairs which Chryssa would have liked so much.

"What do you want, my dear?" inquired another gentleman who had just come from the forward deck. "What are you looking for?"

"For a chair, sir," said Chryssa; "everybody's got one but me—I wish there was just one more."

"I dare say there is one more," said the gentleman smiling. "You haven't looked all over the boat, have you?"

"Oh no, sir. Aunt Esther told me not to go out of sight, so I've only looked on this side and a little bit on the other."

"Come with me and we will look further," said the gentleman; and after a glance towards Mrs. Rutherford to make sure that she saw the proceeding, Chryssa followed her new acquaintance very willingly. He found her a chair after a very short search; not indeed an unoccupied one, but as it held only *part* of somebody, that part was dislodged with a courteous "By your leave, sir;" and whether patent leather boots liked the floor or

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no, Chryssa liked her chair and was very glad of it; though when the gentleman had set it down for her by Mrs. Rutherford, he hardly stayed long enough for her to thank him. And there she and Sybil sat for the rest of the day, and read their books and eat candy by turns.

Night found them both asleep in the Mervyn hotel at Courtland.

The first two days it rained; and as they had little to do within doors, Sybil proposed that Chryssa should have a new book to help pass away the time. But when Mr. Rutherford had brought a pretty little "Vacations at Home," with a marbled cover and red back, a new difficulty arose.

"I'll read it aloud to you, Chryssa," said Sybil.

"But I'd rather read it to myself," said Chryssa.

"Oh no, this is much the best way, and then you see we can both read it at once."

"Well, you read it first and I'll wait," said Chryssa.

"But I can't do that, because it's your book," said Sybil. "I'll read it to you."

"I had a great deal rather read it to myself," said Chryssa, "but you may read it aloud if you wish."

The book was a great amusement, even read aloud, and when the children were tired of that, they amused themselves by running up and down the wide hall of the hotel, but softly, so as not to disturb other people.

One day after it had cleared up, Chryssa was playing there when the head waiter came by. He had taken a great fancy to her, and now he stopped and took her up in his arms, and asked her if she ever saw any ducks, and if she would like to see some.

No, Chryssa said, she had never seen any, but she would like to see them very much. Did they look like bantams?

Forsyth laughed, and telling her she should see, he carried her down into the yard, where were ever so many ducks—white and purple and green and black. Chryssa thought they were quite splendid.

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"But what do they keep them shut up here for?" she said. "I shouldn't think they would like it."

"They won't be shut up here long," said Forsyth; "you'll see some of them on the table for dinner."

"For dinner?" said Chryssa. "Are they going to kill all those pretty ducks?"

"Every one of them."

Chryssa was like the little girl in the fairy tale—"she turned away her head and wished herself at home,"—and Forsyth took her upstairs again.

"Aunt Esther!" she exclaimed as soon as she reached their own room, "don't eat any ducks for dinner!"

"Mayn't I eat a small piece of one?" said her aunt.

"Oh no, indeed you mustn't," said Chryssa, "because they're all running about the yard now! I saw them, and they looked so pretty."

"Why, where have you been, Chryssa? and what is all this about ducks? There are a great many ducks running about in different places."

"Forsyth took me down to see some ducks," explained Chryssa, "and I liked them so much, and he said we should have them all for dinner."

"When I shall like them very much," said her aunt. "Why Chryssa, my dear, all the ducks you ever tasted were alive once—didn't you know that? Have you forgotten about the spider's dinner and ours?"

"No," said Chryssa, "but these ducks were so pretty, and I never saw any before, and they have such bright eyes. I would't eat one for anything."

"Well, perhaps we shall not have a chance after all."

And whatever was the reason, no ducks appeared on the dinner-table, and Chryssa certainly enjoyed her dinner the more for their absence. With the dessert came on large dishes of fine plums, and a gentleman near Mrs. Rutherford took a purple one and a white one and offered them to Chryssa. But whether she thought she had had her share already, or whether some of the fear with which she regarded the gentleman was transferred

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to the plums, I don't know; but she steadily refused to take them, and even put her face down in her aunt's lap for very shyness. Thereupon the plums were offered to Sybil, who took them at once; and then Chryssa began to think she had been very foolish.

"Chryssa," said Sybil that evening after tea, "I've got a letter for you in my basket."

"A letter for me?" said Chryssa: "who can it be from?"

"It's from Cupid Gray," said Sybil, "who lives at the sign of the hearth-rug."

"Why, she isn't gray," said Chryssa when they had both laughed; "her name ought to be White."

"No, it's Gray," said Sybil; "Cupid Gray and Bessie White."

"But where did you get the letter?" said Chryssa.

"Never mind," said Sybil; "I got it—somewhere. Now sit still and I'll read it to you."

"It looks just like your writing!" said Chryssa, peering over to look at the letter.

"Hush!" said Sybil. "Of course, if anybody taught the cats to write, I did. Now, Chryssa, sit still!"

So Chryssa sat still, only her eyes sparkled very much as Sybil read:—

"My much-loved friend, what makes you stay
So long from home and me away?
It makes my heart with sorrow burn;
I fear that you will ne'er return.
I have but one friend left, and she
Is busy oft, nor thinks of me.
Why aren't you here to plead my cause
Against the rigorous dairy laws?
To shelter me beneath your chair;
And when you can't protect me there,
Out of the window quick to throw,
Or make me to the garret go?
About the barn there are strange cats,
Who make sad havoc of the rats;
So that when I go over there,
I cannot even get my share.
And mice are scarce, and things in feather
Are thought too precious altogether,

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For cats to eat. Upon my word,
One day I caught a tiny bird;
But scarce had I my prey half shaken,
When from me it was roughly taken!
A chicken then I thought to try—
But Biddy on me had her eye,
And quick before I was aware
Her namesake screamed, and she was there!
Your tender heart it would have grieved
To see the blows that I received.
But I of woes will say no more,
Though of them I've a plenteous store.
Beneath the honeysuckle bush I lie,
And think of you, and watch the sky,
And wash my face and smell the clover,
And take the sunshine in all over.
With every breeze my hairs now float,
And soon I'll have a bran new coat;
My eyes are as the gooseberry green,
And redder nose was never seen.
Writing so long has tired my paw,
And scarcely can I move a claw.
Come back again my head to tap—
To let me rest upon your lap—
To help me when all angry get—
Come back once more to see your pet.
Hoping my note may not prove stupid,
I sign myself,

YOUR LITTLE CUPID.

"Oh! that's splendid!" said Chryssa, laughing and clapping her hands. "But Bess ought to have written too."

"Yes, but Bess's letter was private and confidential."

A week had been spent at Courtland in walking and driving, and then the family set out for their own home; and Sybil longed for her pet books again, and Chryssa for her chickens and kitten; and to wonder how she could have been so glad to leave them.

London: Printed by STEWART and MURRAY, Old Bailey.

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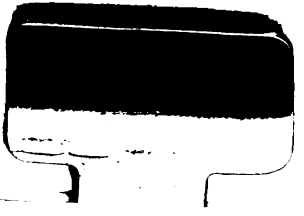

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